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Incidents in the life of a slave girl

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December, 1997

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**INCIDENTS
IN THE
LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL.**

WRITTEN BY HERSELF.

"Northerners know nothing at all about Slavery. They think it is perpetual bondage only. They have no conception of the depth of degradation involved in that word, SLAVERY; if they had, they would never cease their efforts until so horrible a system was overthrown."
A Woman of North Carolina .

"Rise up, ye women that are at ease! Hear my voice, ye careless daughters! Give ear unto my speech."

Isaiah xxxii.9.

EDITED BY L MARIA CHILD.

BOSTON:

PUBLISHED FOR THE AUTHOR.

1861.

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PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR .

Reader, be assured this narrative is no fiction. I am aware that some of my adventures may seem incredible; but they are, nevertheless, strictly true. I have not exaggerated the wrongs inflicted by Slavery; on the contrary, my descriptions fall far short of the facts. I have concealed the names of places, and given persons fictitious names. I had no motive for secrecy on my own account, but I deemed it kind and considerate towards others to pursue this course.

I wish I were more competent to the task I have undertaken. But I trust my readers will excuse deficiencies in consideration of circumstances. I was born and reared in Slavery; and I remained in a Slave State twenty-seven years. Since I have been at the North, it has been necessary for me to work diligently for my own support, and the education of my children. This has not left me much leisure to make up for the loss of early opportunities to improve myself; and it has compelled me to write these pages at irregular intervals, whenever I could snatch an hour from household duties.

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When I first arrived in Philadelphia, Bishop Paine advised me to publish a sketch of my life, but I told him I was altogether incompetent to such an undertaking. Though I have improved my mind somewhat since that time, I still remain of the same opinion; but I trust my motives will excuse what might otherwise seem presumptuous. I have not written my experiences in order to attract attention to myself; on the contrary, it would have been more pleasant to me to have been silent about my own history. Neither do I care to excite sympathy for my own sufferings. But I do earnestly desire to arouse the women of the North to a realizing sense of the condition of two millions of women at the South, still in bondage, suffering what I suffered, and most of them far worse. I want to add my testimony to that of abler pens to convince the people of the Free States what Slavery really is. Only by experience can any one realize how deep, and dark, and foul is that pit of abominations. May the blessing of God rest on this imperfect effort in behalf of my persecuted people!

Linda Brent .

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INTRODUCTION BY THE EDITOR.

The author of the following autobiography is personally known to me, and her conversation and manners inspire me with confidence. During the last seventeen years, she has lived the greater part of the time with a distinguished family in New York, and has so deported herself as to be highly esteemed by them. This fact is sufficient, without further credentials of her character. I believe those who know her will not be disposed to doubt her veracity, though some incidents in her story are more romantic than fiction.

At her request, I have revised her manuscript; but such changes as I have made have been mainly for purposes of condensation and orderly arrangement. I have not added any thing to the incidents, or changed the import of her very pertinent remarks. With trifling exceptions, both the ideas and the language are her own. I pruned excrescences a little, but otherwise I had no reason for changing her lively and dramatic way of telling her own story. The names of both persons and places are known to me; but for good reasons I suppress them.

It will naturally excite surprise that a woman reared in Slavery should be able to write so well. But circumstances

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will explain this. In the first place, nature endowed her with quick perceptions. Secondly, the mistress, with whom she lived till she was twelve years old, was a kind, considerate friend, who taught her to read and spell. Thirdly, she was placed in favorable circumstances after she came to the North; having frequent intercourse with intelligent persons, who felt a friendly interest in her welfare, and were disposed to give her opportunities for self-improvement.

I am well aware that many will accuse me of indecorum for presenting these pages to the public; for the experiences of this intelligent and much-injured woman belong to a class which some call delicate subjects, and others indelicate. This peculiar phase of Slavery has generally been kept veiled; but the public ought to be made acquainted with its monstrous features, and I willingly take the responsibility of presenting them with the veil withdrawn. I do this for the sake of my sisters in bondage, who are suffering wrongs so foul, that our ears are too delicate to listen to them. I do it with the hope of arousing conscientious and reflecting women at the North to a sense of their duty in the exertion of moral influence on the question of Slavery, on all possible occasions. I do it with the hope that every man who reads this narrative will swear solemnly before God that, so far as he has power to prevent it, no fugitive from Slavery shall ever be sent back to suffer in that loathsome den of corruption and cruelty.

L. Maria Child .

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**INCIDENTS
IN THE
LIFE OF A SLAVE GIRL,
SEVEN YEARS CONCEALED.**

I. CHILDHOOD.

I WAS born a slave; but I never knew it till six years of happy childhood had passed away. My father was a carpenter, and considered so intelligent and skilful in his trade, that, when buildings out of the common line were to be erected, he was sent for from long distances, to be head workman. On condition of paying his mistress two hundred dollars a year, and supporting himself, he was allowed to work at his trade, and manage his own affairs. His strongest wish was to purchase his children; but, though he several times offered his hard earnings for that purpose, he never succeeded. In complexion my parents were a light shade of brownish yellow, and were termed mulattoes. They lived together in a comfortable home; and,

though we were all
slaves, I was so fondly
shielded that I never
dreamed I was a piece

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of merchandise, trusted
to them for safe
keeping, and liable to
be demanded of them
at any moment. I had
one brother, William,
who was two years
younger than myself--a
bright, affectionate
child. I had also a great
treasure in my
maternal grandmother,
who was a remarkable
woman in many
respects. She was the
daughter of a planter in
South Carolina, who, at
his death, left her
mother and his three
children free, with
money to go to St.
Augustine, where they
had relatives. It was
during the
Revolutionary War; and
they were captured on
their passage, carried
back, and sold to
different purchasers.
Such was the story my
grandmother used to
tell me; but I do not
remember all the
particulars. She was a
little girl when she was
captured and sold to
the keeper of a large
hotel. I have often
heard her tell how hard

she fared during childhood. But as she grew older she evinced so much intelligence, and was so faithful, that her master and mistress could not help seeing it was for their interest to take care of such a valuable piece of property. She became an indispensable personage in the household, officiating in all capacities, from cook and wet nurse to seamstress. She was much praised for her cooking; and her nice crackers became so famous in the neighborhood that many people were desirous of obtaining them. In consequence of numerous requests of this kind, she asked permission of her mistress to bake crackers at night, after all the household work was done; and she obtained leave to do it, provided she would clothe herself and her children from the profits. Upon these terms, after working hard all day for her mistress, she began her midnight bakings,

assisted by her two oldest children. The business proved profitable; and each year she laid by a little, which was saved for a fund to purchase her children. Her master died, and the property was divided among his heirs. The widow had her dower in the hotel, which she continued to keep open. My grandmother remained in her service as a slave; but her children were divided among her master's children. As she had five, Benjamin, the youngest one, was sold, in order that each heir might have an equal portion of dollars and cents. There was so little difference in our ages that he seemed more like my brother than my uncle. He was a bright, handsome lad, nearly white; for he inherited the complexion my grandmother had derived from Anglo-Saxon ancestors. Though only ten years old, seven hundred and twenty dollars were paid for him. His sale was a terrible blow to my grandmother; but she was naturally hopeful, and she went

to work with renewed energy, trusting in time to be able to purchase some of her children. She had laid up three hundred dollars, which her mistress one day begged as a loan, promising to pay her soon. The reader probably knows that no promise or writing given to a slave is legally binding; for, according to Southern laws, a slave, being property, can hold no property. When my grandmother lent her hard earnings to her mistress, she trusted solely to her honor. The honor of a slaveholder to a slave!

To this good grandmother I was indebted for many comforts. My brother Willie and I often received portions of the crackers, cakes, and preserves, she made to sell; and after we ceased to be children we

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were indebted to her for many more important services. Such were the unusually fortunate circumstances of my

early childhood. When I was six years old, my mother died; and then, for the first time, I learned, by the talk around me, that I was a slave. My mother's mistress was the daughter of my grandmother's mistress. She was the foster sister of my mother; they were both nourished at my grandmother's breast. In fact, my mother had been weaned at three months old, that the babe of the mistress might obtain sufficient food. They played together as children; and, when they became women, my mother was a most faithful servant to her whiter foster sister. On her death-bed her mistress promised that her children should never suffer for any thing; and during her lifetime she kept her word. They all spoke kindly of my dead mother, who had been a slave merely in name, but in nature was noble and womanly. I grieved for her, and my young mind was troubled with the thought who would now take care of me and my little brother. I was told that

my home was now to
be with her mistress;
and I found it a happy
one. No toilsome or
disagreeable duties
were imposed upon
me. My mistress was so
kind to me that I was
always glad to do her
bidding, and proud to
labor for her as much
as my young years
would permit. I would
sit by her side for
hours, sewing
diligently, with a heart
as free from care as
that of any free-born
white child. When she
thought I was tired, she
would send me out to
run and jump; and
away I bounded, to
gather berries or
flowers to decorate her
room. Those were

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happy days--too happy
to last. The slave child
had no thought for the
morrow; but there
came that blight, which
too surely waits on
every human being
born to be a chattel.
When I was nearly
twelve years old, my
kind mistress sickened
and died. As I saw the
cheek grow paler, and
the eye more glassy,
how earnestly I prayed

in my heart that she
might live! I loved her;
for she had been
almost like a mother to
me. My prayers were
not answered. She died,
and they buried her in
the little churchyard,
where, day after day,
my tears fell upon her
grave.

I was sent to spend a
week with my
grandmother. I was
now old enough to
begin to think of the
future; and again and
again I asked myself
what they would do
with me. I felt sure I
should never find
another mistress so
kind as the one who
was gone. She had
promised my dying
mother that her
children should never
suffer for any thing;
and when I
remembered that, and
recalled her many
proofs of attachment to
me, I could not help
having some hopes that
she had left me free. My
friends were almost
certain it would be so.
They thought she
would be sure to do it,
on account of my
mother's love and
faithful service. But,
alas! we all know that
the memory of a

faithful slave does not
avail much to save her
children from the
auction block.

After a brief period of
suspense, the will of
my mistress was read,
and we learned that
she had bequeathed me
to her sister's daughter,
a child of five years old.
So vanished our hopes.
My mistress had taught
me the precepts of
God's Word: "Thou
shalt

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love thy neighbor as
thyself." "Whatsoever
ye would that men
should do unto you, do
ye even so unto them."
But I was her slave, and
I suppose she did not
recognize me as her
neighbor. I would give
much to blot out from
my memory that one
great wrong. As a child,
I loved my mistress;
and, looking back on
the happy days I spent
with her, I try to think
with less bitterness of
this act of injustice.
While I was with her,
she taught me to read
and spell; and for this
privilege, which so
rarely falls to the lot of

a slave, I bless her
memory.

She possessed but few
slaves; and at her death
those were all
distributed among her
relatives. Five of them
were my
grandmother's
children, and had
shared the same milk
that nourished her
mother's children.
Notwithstanding my
grandmother's long
and faithful service to
her owners, not one of
her children escaped
the auction block.
These God-breathing
machines are no more,
in the sight of their
masters, than the
cotton they plant, or
the horses they tend.

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II. THE NEW MASTER AND MISTRESS.

Dr. Flint , a physician in
the neighborhood, had
married the sister of
my mistress, and I was
now the property of
their little daughter. It
was not without
murmuring that I
prepared for my new
home; and what added

to my unhappiness,
was the fact that my
brother William was
purchased by the same
family. My father, by his
nature, as well as by
the habit of transacting
business as a skilful
mechanic, had more of
the feelings of a
freeman than is
common among slaves.
My brother was a
spirited boy; and being
brought up under such
influences, he early
detested the name of
master and mistress.
One day, when his
father and his mistress
both happened to call
him at the same time,
he hesitated between
the two; being
perplexed to know
which had the
strongest claim upon
his obedience. He
finally concluded to go
to his mistress. When
my father reproved him
for it, he said, "You both
called me, and I didn't
know which I ought to
go to first."

"You are my child,"
replied our father, "and
when I call you, you
should come
immediately, if you
have to pass through
fire and water."

Poor Willie! He was
now to learn his first

lesson of obedience to
a master. Grandmother
tried to cheer us with
hopeful words, and
they found an echo in
the credulous hearts of
youth.

When we entered our
new home we
encountered

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cold looks, cold words,
and cold treatment. We
were glad when the
night came. On my
narrow bed I moaned
and wept, I felt so
desolate and alone.

I had been there nearly
a year, when a dear
little friend of mine
was buried. I heard her
mother sob, as the
clods fell on the coffin
of her only child, and I
turned away from the
grave, feeling thankful
that I still had
something left to love. I
met my grandmother,
who said, "Come with
me, Linda;" and from
her tone I knew that
something sad had
happened. She led me
apart from the people,
and then said, "My
child, your father is
dead." Dead! How could
I believe it? He had
died so suddenly I had
not even heard that he
was sick. I went home

with my grandmother.
My heart rebelled
against God, who had
taken from me mother,
father, mistress, and
friend. The good
grandmother tried to
comfort me. "Who
knows the ways of
God?" said she.
"Perhaps they have
been kindly taken from
the evil days to come."
Years afterwards I
often thought of this.
She promised to be a
mother to her
grandchildren, so far as
she might be permitted
to do so; and
strengthened by her
love, I returned to my
master's. I thought I
should be allowed to go
to my father's house
the next morning; but I
was ordered to go for
flowers, that my
mistress's house might
be decorated for an
evening party. I spent
the day gathering
flowers and weaving
them into festoons,
while the dead body of
my father was lying
within a mile of me.
What cared my owners
for that? he was merely
a piece of property.
Moreover, they thought
he had spoiled his
children, by teaching

them to feel that they were human beings.

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This was blasphemous doctrine for a slave to teach; presumptuous in him, and dangerous to the masters.

The next day I followed his remains to a humble grave beside that of my dear mother. There were those who knew my father's worth, and respected his memory.

My home now seemed more dreary than ever. The laugh of the little slave-children sounded harsh and cruel. It was selfish to feel so about the joy of others. My brother moved about with a very grave face. I tried to comfort him, by saying, "Take courage, Willie; brighter days will come by and by."

"You don't know any thing about it, Linda," he replied. "We shall have to stay here all our days; we shall never be free."

I argued that we were growing older and stronger, and that perhaps we might, before long, be allowed

to hire our own time,
and then we could earn
money to buy our
freedom. William
declared this was much
easier to say than to do;
moreover, he did not
intend to buy his
freedom. We held daily
controversies upon this
subject.

Little attention was
paid to the slaves'
meals in Dr. Flint's
house. If they could
catch a bit of food while
it was going, well and
good. I gave myself no
trouble on that score,
for on my various
errands I passed my
grandmother's house,
where there was
always something to
spare for me. I was
frequently threatened
with punishment if I
stopped there; and my
grandmother, to avoid
detaining me, often
stood at the gate with
something for my
breakfast or dinner. I
was indebted to her for
all my comforts,
spiritual or temporal.

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It was her labor that
supplied my scanty
wardrobe. I have a
vivid recollection of the

linsey-woolsey dress
given me every winter
by Mrs. Flint. How I
hated it! It was one of
the badges of slavery.
While my grandmother
was thus helping to
support me from her
hard earnings, the
three hundred dollars
she had lent her
mistress were never
repaid. When her
mistress died, her
son-in-law, Dr. Flint,
was appointed
executor. When
grandmother applied
to him for payment, he
said the estate was
insolvent, and the law
prohibited payment. It
did not, however,
prohibit him from
retaining the silver
candelabra, which had
been purchased with
that money. I presume
they will be handed
down in the family,
from generation to
generation.

My grandmother's
mistress had always
promised her that, at
her death, she should
be free; and it was said
that in her will she
made good the
promise. But when the
estate was settled, Dr.
Flint told the faithful
old servant that, under
existing circumstances,

it was necessary she should be sold.

On the appointed day, the customary advertisement was posted up, proclaiming that there would be a "public sale of negroes, horses, &c." Dr. Flint called to tell my grandmother that he was unwilling to would her feelings by putting her up at auction, and that he would prefer to dispose of her at private sale. My grandmother saw through his hypocrisy; she understood very well that he was ashamed of the job. She was a very spirited woman, and if he was base enough to sell her, when her mistress intended she should be free, she was determined the public should

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know it. She had for a long time supplied many families with crackers and preserves; consequently, "Aunt Marthy," as she was called, was generally known, and every body who knew her respected her

intelligence and good character. Her long and faithful service in the family was also well known, and the intention of her mistress to leave her free. When the day of sale came, she took her place among the chattels, and at the first call she sprang upon the auction-block. Many voices called out, "Shame! Shame! Who is going to sell you, aunt Marthy? Don't stand there! That is no place for you." Without saying a word, she quietly awaited her fate. No one bid for her. At last, a feeble voice said, "Fifty dollars." It came from a maiden lady, seventy years old, the sister of my grandmother's deceased mistress. She had lived forty years under the same roof with my grandmother; she knew how faithfully she had served her owners, and how cruelly she had been defrauded of her rights; and she resolved to protect her. The auctioneer waited for a higher bid; but her wishes were respected; no one bid above her. She could neither read nor write; and when

the bill of sale was made out, she signed it with a cross. But what consequence was that, when she had a big heart overflowing with human kindness? She gave the old servant her freedom.

At that time, my grandmother was just fifty years old.

Laborious years had passed since then; and now my brother and I were slaves to the man who had defrauded her of her money, and tried to defraud her of her freedom. One of my mother's sisters, called Aunt Nancy, was also a slave in his family. She was a kind, good aunt to me; and supplied the

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place of both housekeeper and waiting maid to her mistress. She was, in fact, at the beginning and end of every thing.

Mrs. Flint, like many southern women, was totally deficient in energy. She had not strength to superintend her household affairs; but her nerves were so strong, that she could sit in her easy chair and see a woman whipped,

till the blood trickled from every stroke of the lash. She was a member of the church; but partaking of the Lord's supper did not seem to put her in a Christian frame of mind. If dinner was not served at the exact time on that particular Sunday, she would station herself in the kitchen, and wait till it was dished, and then spit in all the kettles and pans that had been used for cooking. She did this to prevent the cook and her children from eking out their meagre fare with the remains of the gravy and other scrapings. The slaves could get nothing to eat except what she chose to give them. Provisions were weighed out by the pound and ounce, three times a day. I can assure you she gave them no chance to eat wheat bread from her flour barrel. She knew how many biscuits a quart of flour would make, and exactly what size they ought to be.

Dr. Flint was an epicure. The cook never sent a dinner to his table without fear and trembling; for if

there happened to be a dish not to his liking, he would either order her to be whipped, or compel her to eat every mouthful of it in his presence. The poor, hungry creature might not have objected to eating it; but she did object to having her master cram it down her throat till she choked.

They had a pet dog, that was a nuisance in the house.

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The cook was ordered to make some Indian mush for him. He refused to eat, and when his head was held over it, the froth flowed from his mouth into the basin. He died a few minutes after. When Dr. Flint came in, he said the mush had not been well cooked, and that was the reason the animal would not eat it. He sent for the cook, and compelled her to eat it. He thought that the woman's stomach was stronger than the dog's; but her sufferings afterwards proved that he was

mistaken. This poor woman endured many cruelties from her master and mistress; sometimes she was locked up, away from her nursing baby, for a whole day and night.

When I had been in the family a few weeks, one of the plantation slaves was brought to town, by order of his master. It was near night when he arrived, and Dr. Flint ordered him to be taken to the work house, and tied up to the joist, so that his feet would just escape the ground. In that situation he was to wait till the doctor had taken his tea. I shall never forget that night. Never before, in my life, had I heard hundreds of blows fall, in succession, on a human being. His piteous groans, and his "O, pray don't, massa," rang in my ear for months afterwards. There were many conjectures as to the cause of this terrible punishment. Some said master accused him of stealing corn; others said the slave had quarrelled with his wife, in presence of the overseer, and had accused his master of

being the father of her child. They were both black, and the child was very fair.

I went into the work house next morning, and saw the cowhide still wet with blood, and the boards all covered with gore. The poor man lived, and continued to quarrel with his wife. A few months afterwards

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Dr. Flint handed them both over to a slave-trader. The guilty man put their value into his pocket, and had the satisfaction of knowing that they were out of sight and hearing. When the mother was delivered into the trader's hands, she said, "You promised to treat me well." To which he replied, "You have let your tongue run too far; damn you!" She had forgotten that it was a crime for a slave to tell who was the father of her child. From others than the master persecution also comes in such cases. I once saw a young slave girl dying soon after the birth of a

child nearly white. In her agony she cried out, "O Lord, come and take me!" Her mistress stood by, and mocked at her like an incarnate fiend. "You suffer, do you?" she exclaimed. "I am glad of it. You deserve it all, and more too."

The girl's mother said, "The baby is dead, thank God; and I hope my poor child will soon be in heaven, too."

"Heaven!" retorted the mistress. "There is no such place for the like of her and her bastard."

The poor mother turned away, sobbing. Her dying daughter called her, feebly, and as she bent over her, I heard her say, "Don't grieve so, mother; God knows all about it; and HE will have mercy upon me."

Her sufferings, afterwards, became so intense, that her mistress felt unable to stay; but when she left the room, the scornful smile was still on her lips. Seven children called her mother. The poor black woman had but the one child, whose eyes she saw

closing in death, while she thanked God for taking her away from the greater bitterness of life.

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III. THE SLAVES' NEW YEAR'S DAY.

Dr. Flint owned a fine residence in town, several farms, and about fifty slaves, besides hiring a number by the year.

Hiring-day at the south takes place on the 1st of January. On the 2d, the slaves are expected to go to their new masters. On a farm, they work until the corn and cotton are laid. They then have two holidays. Some masters give them a good dinner under the trees. This over, they work until Christmas eve. If no heavy charges are meantime brought against them, they are given four or five holidays, whichever the master or overseer may think proper. Then comes New Year's eve; and they gather

together their little alls,
or more properly
speaking, their little
nothings, and wait
anxiously for the
dawning of day. At the
appointed hour the
grounds are thronged
with men, women, and
children, waiting, like
criminals, to hear their
doom pronounced. The
slave is sure to know
who is the most
humane, or cruel
master, within forty
miles of him.

It is easy to find out, on
that day, who clothes
and feeds his slaves
well; for he is
surrounded by a crowd,
begging, "Please,
massa, hire me this
year. I will work very
hard, massa."

If a slave is unwilling to
go with his new master,
he is whipped, or
locked up in jail, until
he consents to go, and
promises not to run
away during the year.

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Should he chance to
change his mind,
thinking it justifiable to
violate an extorted
promise, woe unto him
if he is caught! The
whip is used till the
blood flows at his feet;
and his stiffened limbs

are put in chains, to be
dragged in the field for
days and days!

If he lives until the next
year, perhaps the same
man will hire him
again, without even
giving him an
opportunity of going to
the hiring-ground.

After those for hire are
disposed of, those for
sale are called up.

O, you happy free
women, contrast your
New Year's day with
that of the poor
bond-woman! With you
it is a pleasant season,
and the light of the day
is blessed. Friendly
wishes meet you every
where, and gifts are
showered upon you.
Even hearts that have
been estranged from
you soften at this
season, and lips that
have been silent echo
back, "I wish you a
happy New Year."
Children bring their
little offerings, and
raise their rosy lips for
a caress. They are your
own, and no hand but
that of death can take
them from you.

But to the slave mother
New Year's day comes
laden with peculiar
sorrows. She sits on
her cold cabin floor,

watching the children
who may all be torn
from her the next
morning; and often
does she wish that she
and they might die
before the day dawns.
She may be an ignorant
creature, degraded by
the system that has
brutalized her from
childhood; but she has
a mother's instincts,
and is capable of
feeling a mother's
agonies.

On one of these sale
days, I saw a mother
lead seven children to
the auction-block. She
knew that some of
them would be taken
from her; but they took
all. The

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children were sold to a
slave-trader, and their
mother was bought by
a man in her own town.
Before night her
children were all far
away. She begged the
trader to tell her where
he intended to take
them; this he refused to
do. How could he, when
he knew he would sell
them, one by one,
wherever he could
command the highest
price? I met that

mother in the street,
and her wild, haggard
face lives to-day in my
mind. She wrung her
hands in anguish, and
exclaimed, "Gone! All
gone! Why don't God
kill me?" I had no
words wherewith to
comfort her. Instances
of this kind are of daily,
yea, of hourly
occurrence.

Slaveholders have a
method, peculiar to
their institution, of
getting rid of old slaves,
whose lives have been
worn out in their
service. I knew an old
woman, who for
seventy years faithfully
served her master. She
had become almost
helpless, from hard
labor and disease. Her
owners moved to
Alabama, and the old
black woman was left
to be sold to any body
who would give twenty
dollars for her.

**IV.
THE SLAVE WHO
DARED TO FEEL LIKE
A MAN.**

Two years had passed since I entered Dr. Flint's family, and those years had brought much of the knowledge that comes from experience, though they had afforded little opportunity for any other kinds of knowledge.

My grandmother had, as much as possible, been a mother to her orphan grandchildren. By perseverance and unwearied industry, she was now mistress of a snug little home, surrounded with the necessaries of life. She would have been happy could her children have shared them with her. There remained but three children and two grandchildren, all slaves. Most earnestly did she strive to make us feel that it was the will of God: that He had seen fit to place us under such circumstances; and though it seemed hard, we ought to pray for contentment.

It was a beautiful faith,
coming from a mother
who could not call her
children her own. But I,
and Benjamin, her
youngest boy,
condemned it. We
reasoned that it was
much more the will of
God that we should be
situated as she was. We
longed for a home like
hers. There we always
found sweet balsam for
our troubles. She was
so loving, so
sympathizing! She
always met us with a
smile, and listened with
patience to all our
sorrows. She spoke so
hopefully, that
unconsciously

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the clouds gave place to
sunshine. There was a
grand big oven there,
too, that baked bread
and nice things for the
town, and we knew
there was always a
choice bit in store for
us.

But, alas! even the
charms of the old oven
failed to reconcile us to
our hard lot. Benjamin
was now a tall,
handsome lad, strongly
and gracefully made,
and with a spirit too
bold and daring for a
slave. My brother
William, now twelve

years old, had the same aversion to the word master that he had when he was an urchin of seven years. I was his confidant. He came to me with all his troubles. I remember one instance in particular. It was on a lovely spring morning, and when I marked the sunlight dancing here and there, its beauty seemed to mock my sadness. For my master, whose restless, craving, vicious nature roved about day and night, seeking whom to devour, had just left me, with stinging, scorching words; words that scathed ear and brain like fire. O, how I despised him! I thought how glad I should be, if some day when he walked the earth, it would open and swallow him up, and disencumber the world of a plague.

When he told me that I was made for his use, made to obey his command in every thing; that I was nothing but a slave, whose will must and should surrender to his, never before had my puny arm felt half so strong.

So deeply was I
absorbed in painful
reflections afterwards,
that I neither saw nor
heard the entrance of
any one, till the voice of
William sounded close
beside me. "Linda," said
he, "what makes you
look so sad?"

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I love you. O, Linda,
isn't this a bad world?
Every body seems so
cross and unhappy. I
wish I had died when
poor father did."

I told him that every
body was not cross, or
unhappy; that those
who had pleasant
homes, and kind
friends, and who were
not afraid to love them,
were happy. But we,
who were
slave-children, without
father or mother, could
not expect to be happy.
We must be good;
perhaps that would
bring us contentment.

"Yes," he said, "I try to
be good; but what's the
use? They are all the
time troubling me."
Then he proceeded to
relate his afternoon's
difficulty with young
master Nicholas. It
seemed that the

brother of master
Nicholas had pleased
himself with making up
stories about William.
Master Nicholas said he
should be flogged, and
he would do it.
Whereupon he went to
work; but William
fought bravely, and the
young master, finding
he was getting the
better of him,
undertook to tie his
hands behind him. He
failed in that likewise.
By dint of kicking and
fisting, William came
out of the skirmish
none the worse for a
few scratches.

He continued to
discourse on his young
master's meanness;
how he whipped the
little boys, but was a
perfect coward when a
tussle ensued between
him and white boys of
his own size. On such
occasions he always
took to his legs.
William had other
charges to make
against him. One was
his rubbing up pennies
with quicksilver, and
passing them off for
quarters of a dollar on
an old man who kept a
fruit stall. William was
often sent to buy fruit,
and he earnestly
inquired

of me what he ought to do under such circumstances. I told him it was certainly wrong to deceive the old man, and that it was his duty to tell him of the impositions practised by his young master. I assured him the old man would not be slow to comprehend the whole, and there the matter would end. William thought it might with the old man, but not with him. He said he did not mind the smart of the whip, but he did not like the idea of being whipped. While I advised him to be good and forgiving I was not unconscious of the beam in my own eye. It was the very knowledge of my own shortcomings that urged me to retain, if possible, some sparks of my brother's God-given nature. I had not lived fourteen years in slavery for nothing. I had felt, seen, and heard enough, to read the characters, and question the motives, of those around me. The war of my life had begun; and though one of God's most

powerless creatures, I
resolved never to be
conquered. Alas, for
me!

If there was one pure,
sunny spot for me, I
believed it to be in
Benjamin's heart, and
in another's, whom I
loved with all the ardor
of a girl's first love. My
owner knew of it, and
sought in every way to
render me miserable.
He did not resort to
corporal punishment,
but to all the petty,
tyrannical ways that
human ingenuity could
devise.

I remember the first
time I was punished. It
was in the month of
February. My
grandmother had taken
my old shoes, and
replaced them with a
new pair. I needed
them; for several
inches of snow had
fallen, and it still
continued to fall. When
I walked

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through Mrs. Flint's
room, their creaking
grated harshly on her
refined nerves. She
called me to her, and
asked what I had about

me that made such a horrid noise. I told her it was my new shoes. "Take them off," said she; "and if you put them on again, I'll throw them into the fire."

I took them off, and my stockings also. She then sent me a long distance, on an errand. As I went through the snow, my bare feet tingled. That night I was very hoarse; and I went to bed thinking the next day would find me sick, perhaps dead. What was my grief on waking to find myself quite well!

I had imagined if I died, or was laid up for some time, that my mistress would feel a twinge of remorse that she had so hated "the little imp," as she styled me. It was my ignorance of that mistress that gave rise to such extravagant imaginings.

Dr. Flint occasionally had high prices offered for me; but he always said, "She don't belong to me. She is my daughter's property, and I have no right to sell her." Good, honest man! My young mistress was still a

child, and I could look
for no protection from
her. I loved her, and she
returned my affection. I
once heard her father
allude to her
attachment to me; and
his wife promptly
replied that it
proceeded from fear.
This put unpleasant
doubts into my mind.
Did the child feign what
she did not feel? or was
her mother jealous of
the mite of love she
bestowed on me? I
concluded it must be
the latter. I said to
myself, "Surely, little
children are true."

One afternoon I sat at
my sewing, feeling
unusual depression of
spirits. My mistress
had been accusing

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me of an offence, of
which I assured her I
was perfectly innocent;
but I saw, by the
contemptuous curl of
her lip, that she
believed I was telling a
lie.

I wondered for what
wise purpose God was
leading me through
such thorny paths, and
whether still darker
days were in store for

me. As I sat musing
thus, the door opened
softly, and William
came in. "Well,
brother," said I, "what is
the matter this time?"

"O Linda, Ben and his
master have had a
dreadful time!" said he.

My first thought was
that Benjamin was
killed. "Don't be
frightened, Linda," said
William; "I will tell you
all about it."

It appeared that
Benjamin's master had
sent for him, and he did
not immediately obey
the summons. When he
did, his master was
angry, and began to
whip him. He resisted.
Master and slave
fought, and finally the
master was thrown.
Benjamin had cause to
tremble; for he had
thrown to the ground
his master--one of the
richest men in town. I
anxiously awaited the
result.

That night I stole to my
grandmother's house,
and Benjamin also stole
thither from his
master's. My
grandmother had gone
to spend a day or two

with an old friend
living in the country.

"I have come," said
Benjamin, "to tell you
good by. I am going
away."

I inquired where.

"To the north," he
replied.

I looked at him to see
whether he was in
earnest. I saw it all in
his firm, set mouth. I
implored him not

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to go, but he paid no
heed to my words. He
said he was no longer a
boy, and every day
made his yoke more
galling. He had raised
his hand against his
master, and was to be
publicly whipped for
the offence. I reminded
him of the poverty and
hardships he must
encounter among

strangers. I told him he
might be caught and
brought back; and that
was terrible to think of.
He grew vexed, and
asked if poverty and
hardships with
freedom, were not
preferable to our
treatment in slavery.
"Linda," he continued,

"we are dogs here;
foot-balls, cattle, every
thing that's mean. No, I
will not stay. Let them
bring me back. We
don't die but once."

He was right; but it was
hard to give him up.
"Go," said I, "and break
your mother's heart."

I repented of my words
are they were out.

"Linda," said he,
speaking as I had not
heard him speak that
evening, "how could
you say that? Poor
mother! be kind to her,
Linda; and you, too,
cousin Fanny."

Cousin Fanny was a
friend who had lived
some years with us.

Farewells were
exchanged, and the
bright, kind boy,
endeared to us by so
many acts of love,
vanished from our
sight.

It is not necessary to
state how he made his
escape. Suffice it to say,
he was on his way to
New York when a
violent storm overtook
the vessel. The captain
said he must put into
the nearest port. This
alarmed Benjamin, who
was aware that he

would be advertised in every port near his own town. His embarrassment was

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noticed by the captain. To port they went. There the advertisement met the captain's eye. Benjamin so exactly answered its description, that the captain laid hold on him, and bound him in chains. The storm passed, and they proceeded to New York. Before reaching that port Benjamin managed to get off his chains and throw them overboard. He escaped from the vessel, but was pursued, captured, and carried back to his master.

When my grandmother returned home and found her youngest child had fled, great was her sorrow; but, with characteristic piety, she said, "God's will be done." Each morning, she inquired if any news had been heard from her boy. Yes, news was heard. The master was rejoicing over a letter,

announcing the capture
of his human chattel.

That day seems but as
yesterday, so well do I
remember it. I saw him
led through the streets
in chains, to jail. His
face was ghastly pale,
yet full of
determination. He had
begged one of the
sailors to go to his
mother's house and ask
her not to meet him. He
said the sight of her
distress would take
from him all
self-control. She
yearned to see him, and
she went; but she
screened herself in the
crowd, that it might be
as her child had said.

We were not allowed to
visit him; but we had
known the jailer for
years, and he was a
kind-hearted man. At
midnight he opened
the jail door for my
grandmother and
myself to enter, in
disguise. When we
entered the cell not a
sound broke the
stillness. "Benjamin,
Benjamin!" Whispered
my grandmother. No
answer. "Benjamin!"
she again faltered.
There

was a jingle of chains.
The moon had just
risen, and cast an
uncertain light through
the bars of the window.
We knelt down and
took Benjamin's cold
hands in ours. We did
not speak. Sobs were
heard, and Benjamin's
lips were unsealed; for
his mother was
weeping on his neck.
How vividly does
memory bring back
that sad night! Mother
and son talked
together. He asked her
pardon for the
suffering he had cause
her. She said she had
nothing to forgive; she
could not blame his
desire for freedom. He
told her that when he
was captured, he broke
away, and was about
casting himself into the
river, when thoughts of
her came over him, and
he desisted. She asked
if he did not also think
of God. I fancied I saw
his face grow fierce in
the moonlight. He
answered, "No, I did
not think of him. When
a man is hunted like a
wild beast he forgets
there is a God, a
heaven. He forgets
every thing in his
struggle to get beyond

the reach of the
bloodhounds."

"Don't talk so,
Benjamin," said she.
"Put your trust in God.
Be humble, my child,
and your master will
forgive you."

"Forgive me for what,
mother? For not letting
him treat me like a
dog? No! I will never
humble myself to him. I
have worked for him
for nothing all my life,
and I am repaid with
stripes and
imprisonment. Here I
will stay till I die, or till
he sells me."

The poor mother
shuddered at his
words. I think he felt it;
for when he next spoke,
his voice was calmer.
"Don't fret about me,
mother. I ain't worth it,"
said he. "I wish I had
some of your goodness.
You bear every thing
patiently, just as though
you thought it was all
right. I wish I could."

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She told him she had
not always been so;
once, she was like him;
but when sore troubles
came upon her, and she
had no arm to lean

upon, she learned to call on God, and he lightened her burdens. She besought him to do likewise.

We overstaid our time, and were obliged to hurry from the jail.

Benjamin had been imprisoned three weeks, when my grandmother went to intercede for him with his master. He was immovable. He said Benjamin should serve as an example to the rest of his slaves; he should be kept in jail till he was subdued, or be sold if he got but one dollar for him. However, he afterwards relented in some degree. The chains were taken off, and we were allowed to visit him.

As his food was of the coarsest kind, we carried him as often as possible a warm supper, accompanied with some little luxury for the jailer.

Three months elapsed, and there was no prospect of release or of a purchaser. One day he was heard to sing and laugh. This piece of indecorum was told to

his master, and the overseer was ordered to re-chain him. He was now confined in an apartment with other prisoners, who were covered with filthy rags. Benjamin was chained near them, and was soon covered with vermin. He worked at his chains till he succeeded in getting out of them. He passed them through the bars of the window, with a request that they should be taken to his master, and he should be informed that he was covered with vermin.

This audacity was punished with heavier chains, and prohibition of our visits.

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My grandmother continued to send him fresh changes of clothes. The old ones were burned up. The last night we saw him in jail his mother still begged him to send for his master, and beg his pardon. Neither persuasion nor argument could turn him from his purpose.

He calmly answered, "I am waiting his time."

Those chains were mournful to hear.

Another three months passed, and Benjamin left his prison walls. We that loved him waited to bid him a long and last farewell. A slave trader had bought him. You remember, I told you what price he brought when ten years of age. Now he was more than twenty years old, and sold for three hundred dollars. The master had been blind to his own interest. Long confinement had made his face too pale, his form too thin; moreover, the trader had heard something of his character, and it did not strike him as suitable for a slave. He said he would give any price if the handsome lad was a girl. We thanked God that he was not.

Could you have seen that mother clinging to her child, when they fastened the irons upon his wrists; could you have heard her heart-rending groans, and seen her bloodshot eyes wander wildly

from face to face, vainly
pleading for mercy;
could you have
witnessed that scene as
I saw it, you would
exclaim, Slavery is
damnable!

Benjamin, her
youngest, her pet, was
forever gone! She could
not realize it. She had
had an interview with
the trader for the
purpose of ascertaining
if Benjamin could be
purchased. She was
told it was

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impossible, as he had
given bonds not to sell
him till he was out of
the state. He promised
that he would not sell
him till he reached New
Orleans.

With a strong arm and
unvaried trust, my
grandmother began her
work of love. Benjamin
must be free. If she
succeeded, she knew
they would still be
separated; but the
sacrifice was not too
great. Day and night
she labored. The
trader's price would
treble that he gave; but
she was not
discouraged.

She employed a lawyer to write to a gentleman, whom she knew, in New Orleans. She begged him to interest himself for Benjamin, and he willingly favored her request. When he saw Benjamin, and stated his business, he thanked him; but said he preferred to wait a while before making the trader an offer. He knew he had tried to obtain a high price for him, and had invariably failed. This encouraged him to make another effort for freedom. So one morning, long before day, Benjamin was missing. He was riding over the blue billows, bound for Baltimore.

For once his white face did him a kindly service. They had no suspicion that it belonged to a slave; otherwise, the law would have been followed out to the letter, and the thing rendered back to slavery. The brightest skies are often overshadowed by the darkest clouds. Benjamin was taken sick, and compelled to remain in Baltimore

three weeks. His strength was slow in returning; and his desire to continue his journey seemed to retard his recovery. How could he get strength without air and exercise? He resolved to venture on a short walk. A by-street was selected, where he thought himself secure of not being met by

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any one that knew him; but a voice called out, "Halloo, Ben, my boy! what are you doing here? "

His first impulse was to run; but his legs trembled so that he could not stir. He turned to confront his antagonist, and behold, there stood his old master's next door neighbor! He thought it was all over with him now; but it proved otherwise. That man was a miracle. He possessed a goodly number of slaves, and yet was not quite deaf to that mystic clock, whose ticking is rarely heard in the slaveholder's breast.

"Ben, you are sick," said he. "Why, you look like a ghost. I guess I gave you something of a start. Never mind, Ben, I am not going to touch you. You had a pretty tough time of it, and you may go on your way rejoicing for all me. But I would advise you to get out of this place plaguy quick, for there are several gentlemen here from our town." He described the nearest and safest route to New York, and added, "I shall be glad to tell your mother I have seen you. Good by, Ben."

Benjamin turned away, filled with gratitude, and surprised that the town he hated contained such a gem--a gem worthy of a purer setting.

This gentleman was a Northerner by birth, and had married a southern lady. On his return, he told my grandmother that he had seen her son, and of the service he had rendered him.

Benjamin reached New York safely, and concluded to stop there until he had gained

strength enough to
proceed further. It
happened that my
grandmother's only
remaining son had
sailed for the same city
on business for his
mistress. Through
God's providence,

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the brothers met. You
may be sure it was a
happy meeting. "O
Phil," exclaimed
Benjamin, "I am here at
last." Then he told him
how near he came to
dying, almost in sight of
free land, and how he
prayed that he might
live to get one breath of
free air. He said life was
worth something now,
and it would be hard to
die. In the old jail he
had not valued it; once,
he was tempted to
destroy it; but
something, he did not
know what, had
prevented him;
perhaps it was fear. He
had heard those who
profess to be religious
declare there was no
heaven for
self-murderers; and as
his life had been pretty
hot here, he did not
desire a continuation of
the same in another
world. "If I die now," he

exclaimed, "thank God,
I shall die a freeman!"
He begged my uncle
Phillip not to return
south; but stay and
work with him, till they
earned enough to buy
those at home. His
brother told him it
would kill their mother
if he deserted her in
her trouble. She had
pledged her house, and
with difficulty had
raised money to buy
him. Would he be
bought?

"No, never!" he replied.
"Do you suppose, Phil,
when I have got so far
out of their clutches, I
will give them one red
cent? No! And do you
suppose I would turn
mother out of her
home in her old age?
That I would let her
pay all those
hard-earned dollars for
me, and never to see
me? For you know she
will stay south as long
as her other children
are slaves. What a good
mother! Tell her to buy
you, Phil. You have
been a comfort to her,
and I have been a
trouble. And Linda,
poor Linda; what'll
become of her? Phil,
you don't know what a

life they lead her. She
has told

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me something about it,
and I wish old Flint was
dead, or a better man.
When I was in jail, he
asked her if she didn't
want him to ask my
master to forgive me,
and take me home
again. She told him, No;
that I didn't want to go
back. He got mad, and
said we were all alike. I
never despised my own
master half as much as
I do that man. There is
many a worse
slaveholder than my
master; but for all that I
would not be his slave."

While Benjamin was
sick, he had parted
with nearly all his
clothes to pay
necessary expenses.
But he did not part
with a little pin I
fastened in his bosom
when we parted. It was
the most valuable thing
I owned, and I thought
none more worthy to
wear it. He had it still.

His brother furnished
him with clothes, and
gave him what money
he had.

They parted with
moistened eyes; and as
Benjamin turned away,
he said, "Phil, I part
with all my kindred."
And so it proved. We
never heard from him
again.

Uncle Phillip came
home; and the first
words he uttered when
he entered the house
were, "Mother, Ben is
free! I have seen him in
New York." She stood
looking at him with a
bewildered air.

"Mother, don't you
believe it?" he said,
laying his hand softly
upon her shoulder. She
raised her hands, and
exclaimed, "God be
praised! Let us thank
him." She dropped on
her knees, and poured
forth her heart in
prayer. Then Phillip
must sit down and
repeat to her every
word Benjamin had
said. He told her all;
only he forbore to
mention how sick and
pale her darling

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looked. Why should he
distress her when she
could do him no good?
The brave old woman
still toiled on, hoping to

rescue some of her other children. After a while she succeeded in buying Phillip. She paid eight hundred dollars, and came home with the precious document that secured his freedom. The happy mother and son sat together by the old hearthstone that night, telling how proud they were of each other, and how they would prove to the world that they could take care of themselves, as they had long taken care of others. We all concluded by saying, "He that is Willing to be a slave, let him be a slave."

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V. THE TRIALS OF GIRLHOOD.

During the first years of my service in Dr. Flint's family, I was accustomed to share some indulgences with the children of my mistress. Though this seemed to me no more than right, I was grateful for it, and tried to merit the kindness

by the faithful
discharge of my duties.
But I now entered on
my fifteenth year--a sad
epoch in the life of a
slave girl. My master
began to whisper foul
words in my ear. Young
as I was, I could not
remain ignorant of
their import. I tried to
treat them with
indifference or
contempt. The master's
age, my extreme youth,
and the fear that his
conduct would be
reported to my
grandmother, made
him bear this
treatment for many
months. He was a
crafty man, and
resorted to many
means to accomplish
his purposes.
Sometimes he had
stormy, terrific ways,
that made his victims
tremble; sometimes he
assumed a gentleness
that he thought must
surely subdue. Of the
two, I preferred his
stormy moods,
although they left me
trembling. He tried his
utmost to corrupt the
pure principles my
grandmother had
instilled. He peopled
my young mind with
unclean images, such
as only a vile monster
could think of. I turned

from him with disgust
and hatred. But he was
my master. I was
compelled to live under
the same roof with
him--where I saw a
man forty years my
senior daily violating
the most sacred
commandments

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of nature. He told me I
was his property; that I
must be subject to his
will in all things. My
soul revolted against
the mean tyranny. But
where could I turn for
protection? No matter
whether the slave girl
be as black as ebony or
as fair as her mistress.
In either case, there is
no shadow of law to
protect her from insult,
from violence, or even
from death; all these
are inflicted by fiends
who bear the shape of
men. The mistress, who
ought to protect the
helpless victim, has no
other feelings towards
her but those of
jealousy and rage. The
degradation, the
wrongs, the vices, that
grow out of slavery, are
more than I can
describe. They are
greater than you would
willingly believe.
Surely, if you credited
one half the truths that

are told you concerning
the helpless millions
suffering in this cruel
bondage, you at the
north would not help to
tighten the yoke. You
surely would refuse to
do for the master, on
your own soil, the
mean and cruel work
which trained
bloodhounds and the
lowest class of whites
do for him at the south.
Every where the years
bring to all enough of
sin and sorrow; but in
slavery the very dawn
of life is darkened by
these shadows. Even
the little child, who is
accustomed to wait on
her mistress and her
children, will learn,
before she is twelve
years old, why it is that
her mistress hates such
and such a one among
the slaves. Perhaps the
child's own mother is
among those hated
ones. She listens to
violent outbreaks of
jealous passion, and
cannot help
understanding what is
the cause. She will
become prematurely
knowing in evil things.
Soon she will learn to
tremble when she
hears her master's
footfall. She

will be compelled to realize that she is no longer a child. If God has bestowed beauty upon her, it will prove her greatest curse. That which commands admiration in the white woman only hastens the degradation of the female slave. I know that some are too much brutalized by slavery to feel the humiliation of their position; but many slaves feel it most acutely, and shrink from the memory of it. I cannot tell how much I suffered in the presence of these wrongs, nor how I am still pained by the retrospect. My master met me at every turn, reminding me that I belonged to him, and swearing by heaven and earth that he would compel me to submit to him. If I went out for a breath of fresh air, after a day of unwearied toil, his footsteps dogged me. If I knelt by my mother's grave, his dark shadow fell on me even there. The light heart which nature had given me became heavy with sad forebodings. The other

slaves in my master's
house noticed the
change. Many of them
pitied me; but none
dared to ask the cause.
They had no need to
inquire. They knew too
well the guilty
practices under that
roof; and they were
aware that to speak of
them was an offence
that never went
unpunished.

I longed for some one
to confide in. I would
have given the world to
have laid my head on
my grandmother's
faithful bosom, and told
her all my troubles. But
Dr. Flint swore he
would kill me, if I was
not as silent as the
grave. Then, although
my grandmother was
all in all to me, I feared
her as well as loved her.
I had been accustomed
to look up to her with a
respect bordering upon
awe. I was very young,
and felt shamefaced
about telling her such
impure things,

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especially as I knew her
to be very strict on
such subjects.
Moreover, she was a
woman of a high spirit.
She was usually very

quiet in her demeanor;
but if her indignation
was once roused, it was
not very easily quelled.
I had been told that she
once chased a white
gentleman with a
loaded pistol, because
he insulted one of her
daughters. I dreaded
the consequences of a
violent outbreak; and
both pride and fear
kept me silent. But
though I did not
confide in my
grandmother, and even
evaded her vigilant
watchfulness and
inquiry, her presence in
the neighborhood was
some protection to me.
Though she had been a
slave, Dr. Flint was
afraid of her. He
dreaded her scorching
rebukes. Moreover, she
was known and
patronized by many
people; and he did not
wish to have his villany
made public. It was
lucky for me that I did
not live on a distant
plantation, but in a
town not so large that
the inhabitants were
ignorant of each other's
affairs. Bad as are the
laws and customs in a
slaveholding
community, the doctor,
as a professional man,
deemed it prudent to

keep up some outward
show of decency.

O, what days and nights
of fear and sorrow that
man caused me!

Reader, it is not to
awaken sympathy for
myself that I am telling
you truthfully what I
suffered in slavery. I do
it to kindle a flame of
compassion in your
hearts for my sisters
who are still in
bondage, suffering as I
once suffered.

I once saw two
beautiful children
playing together. One
was a fair white child;
the other was her slave,
and also her sister.
When I saw them
embracing each other,
and heard their joyous
laughter, I turned

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sadly away from the
lovely sight. I foresaw
the inevitable blight
that would fall on the
little slave's heart. I
knew how soon her
laughter would be
changed to sighs. The
fair child grew up to be
a still fairer woman.
From childhood to
womanhood her
pathway was blooming
with flowers, and

overarched by a sunny
sky. Scarcely one day of
her life had been
clouded when the sun
rose on her happy
bridal morning.

How had those years
dealt with her slave
sister, the little
playmate of her
childhood? She, also,
was very beautiful; but
the flowers and
sunshine of love were
not for her. She drank
the cup of sin, and
shame, and misery,
whereof her
persecuted race are
compelled to drink.

In view of these things,
why are ye silent, ye
free men and women of
the north? Why do your
tongues falter in
maintenance of the
right? Would that I had
more ability! But my
heart is so full, and my
pen is so weak! There
are noble men and
women who plead for
us, striving to help
those who cannot help
themselves. God bless
them! God give them
strength and courage to
go on! God bless those,
every where, who are
laboring to advance the
cause of humanity!

VI.
THE JEALOUS
MISTRESS.

I WOULD ten thousand times rather that my children should be the half-starved paupers of Ireland than to be the most pampered among the slaves of America. I would rather drudge out my life on a cotton plantation, till the grave opened to give me rest, than to live with an unprincipled master and a jealous mistress. The felon's home in a penitentiary is preferable. He may repent, and turn from the error of his ways, and so find peace; but it is not so with a favorite slave. She is not allowed to have any pride of character. It is deemed a crime in her to wish to be virtuous.

Mrs. Flint possessed the key to her husband's character before I was born. She might have used this knowledge to counsel and to screen the young and the innocent among her slaves; but for them she had no sympathy. They were

the objects of her constant suspicion and malevolence. She watched her husband with unceasing vigilance; but he was well practised in means to evade it. What he could not find opportunity to say in words he manifested in signs. He invented more than were ever thought of in a deaf and dumb asylum. I let them pass, as if I did not understand what he meant; and many were the curses and threats bestowed on me for my stupidity. One day he caught me teaching myself to write. He frowned, as if he was not well pleased; but I suppose he came to

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the conclusion that such an accomplishment might help to advance his favorite scheme. Before long, notes were often slipped into my hand. I would return them, saying, "I can't read them, sir." "Can't you?" he replied; "then I must read them to you." He always finished the reading by asking, "Do you understand?" Sometimes he would

complain of the heat of
the tea room, and order
his supper to be placed
on a small table in the
piazza. He would seat
himself there with a
well-satisfied smile,
and tell me to stand by
and brush away the
flies. He would eat very
slowly, pausing
between the mouthfuls.
These intervals were
employed in describing
the happiness I was so
foolishly throwing
away, and in
threatening me with
the penalty that finally
awaited my stubborn
disobedience. He
boasted much of the
forbearance he had
exercised towards me,
and reminded me that
there was a limit to his
patience. When I
succeeded in avoiding
opportunities for him
to talk to me at home, I
was ordered to come to
his office, to do some
errand. When there, I
was obliged to stand
and listen to such
language as he saw fit
to address to me.
Sometimes I so openly
expressed my
contempt for him that
he would become
violently enraged, and I
wondered why he did
not strike me.
Circumstanced as he

was, he probably thought it was better policy to be forbearing. But the state of things grew worse and worse daily. In desperation I told him that I must and would apply to my grandmother for protection. He threatened me with death, and worse than death, if I made any complaint to her. Strange to say, I did not despair. I was naturally of a buoyant disposition, and always I

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had a hope of somehow getting out of his clutches. Like many a poor, simple slave before me, I trusted that some threads of joy would yet be woven into my dark destiny.

I had entered my sixteenth year, and every day it became more apparent that my presence was intolerable to Mrs. Flint. Angry words frequently passed between her and her husband. He had never punished me himself, and he would not allow any body else to punish me. In that respect, she

was never satisfied;
but, in her angry
moods, no terms were
too vile for her to
bestow upon me. Yet I,
whom she detested so
bitterly, had far more
pity for her than he
had, whose duty it was
to make her life happy.
I never wronged her, or
wished to wrong her;
and one word of
kindness from her
would have brought me
to her feet.

After repeated quarrels
between the doctor and
his wife, he announced
his intention to take his
youngest daughter,
then four years old, to
sleep in his apartment.
It was necessary that a
servant should sleep in
the same room, to be
on hand if the child
stirred. I was selected
for that office, and
informed for what
purpose that
arrangement had been
made. By managing to
keep within sight of
people, as much as
possible, during the
day time, I had hitherto
succeeded in eluding
my master, though a
razor was often held to
my throat to force me
to change this line of
policy. At night I slept
by the side of my great

aunt, where I felt safe.
He was too prudent to
come into her room.
She was an old woman,
and had been in the
family many years.
Moreover, as a married
man, and a professional
man, he deemed it
necessary to save
appearances

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in some degree. But he
resolved to remove the
obstacle in the way of
his scheme; and he
thought he had planned
it so that he should
evade suspicion. He
was well aware how
much I prized my
refuge by the side of
my old aunt, and he
determined to
dispossess me of it. The
first night the doctor
had the little child in
his room alone. The
next morning, I was
ordered to take my
station as nurse the
following night. A kind
Providence interposed
in my favor. During the
day Mrs. Flint heard of
this new arrangement,
and a storm followed. I
rejoiced to hear it rage.
After a while my
mistress sent for me to
come to her room. Her
first question was, "Did

you know you were to sleep in the doctor's room?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Who told you?"

"My master."

"Will you answer truly all the questions I ask?"

"Yes, ma'am."

"Tell me, then, as you hope to be forgiven, are you innocent of what I have accused you?"

"I am."

She handed me a Bible, and said, "Lay your hand on your heart, kiss this holy book, and swear before God that you tell me the truth."

I took the oath she required, and I did it with a clear conscience.

"You have taken God's holy word to testify your innocence," said she. "If you have deceived me, beware! Now take this stool, sit down, look me directly in the face, and tell me all that has passed between your master and you."

I did as she ordered. As I went on with my account her color changed frequently, she wept, and sometimes groaned. She spoke in tones so sad, that I was touched by her grief. The tears came to my eyes; but I was soon convinced that her emotions arose from anger and wounded pride. She felt that her marriage vows were desecrated, her dignity insulted; but she had no compassion for the poor victim of her husband's perfidy. She pitied herself as a martyr; but she was incapable of feeling for the condition of shame and misery in which her unfortunate, helpless slave was placed.

Yet perhaps she had some touch of feeling for me; for when the conference was ended, she spoke kindly, and promised to protect me. I should have been much comforted by this assurance if I could have had confidence in it; but my experiences in slavery had filled me with distrust. She was not a very refined woman, and had not much control over her

passions. I was an object of her jealousy, and, consequently, of her hatred; and I knew I could not expect kindness or confidence from her under the circumstances in which I was placed. I could not blame her. Slave holders' wives feel as other women would under similar circumstances. The fire of her temper kindled from small sparks, and now the flame became so intense that the doctor was obliged to give up his intended arrangement.

I knew I had ignited the torch, and I expected to suffer for it afterwards; but I felt too thankful to my mistress for the timely aid she rendered me to care much about that. She now took me to sleep in a

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room adjoining her own. There I was an object of her especial care, though not of her especial comfort, for she spent many a sleepless night to watch over me. Sometimes I woke up,

and found her bending over me. At other times she whispered in my ear, as though it was her husband who was speaking to me, and listened to hear what I would answer. If she startled me, on such occasions, she would glide stealthily away; and the next morning she would tell me I had been talking in my sleep, and ask who I was talking to. At last, I began to be fearful for my life. It had been often threatened; and you can imagine, better than I can describe, what an unpleasant sensation it must produce to wake up in the dead of night and find a jealous woman bending over you. Terrible as this experience was, I had fears that it would give place to one more terrible.

My mistress grew weary of her vigils; they did not prove satisfactory. She changed her tactics. She now tried the trick of accusing my master of crime, in my presence, and gave my name as the author of the accusation. To my utter astonishment, he replied, "I don't believe

it; but if she did
acknowledge it, you
tortured her into
exposing me." Tortured
into exposing him!
Truly, Satan had no
difficulty in
distinguishing the color
of his soul! I
understood his object
in making this false
representation. It was
to show me that I
gained nothing by
seeking the protection
of my mistress; that the
power was still all in
his own hands. I pitied
Mrs. Flint. She was a
second wife, many
years the junior of her
husband; and the
hoary-headed
miscreant was enough
to try the patience

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of a wiser and better
woman. She was
completely foiled, and
knew not how to
proceed. She would
gladly have had me
flogged for my
supposed false oath;
but, as I have already
stated, the doctor never
allowed any one to
whip me. The old
sinner was politic. The
application of the lash
might have led to
remarks that would

have exposed him in
the eyes of his children
and grandchildren.
How often did I rejoice
that I lived in a town
where all the
inhabitants knew each
other! If I had been on
a remote plantation, or
lost among the
multitude of a crowded
city, I should not be a
living woman at this
day.

The secrets of slavery
are concealed like
those of the Inquisition.
My master was, to my
knowledge, the father
of eleven slaves. But
did the mothers dare to
tell who was the father
of their children? Did
the other slaves dare to
allude to it, except in
whispers among
themselves? No,
indeed! They knew too
well the terrible
consequences.

My grandmother could
not avoid seeing things
which excited her
suspicions. She was
uneasy about me, and
tried various ways to
buy me; but the
never-changing answer
was always repeated:
"Linda does not belong
to me. She is my
daughter's property,
and I have no legal
right to sell her." The

conscientious man! He was too scrupulous to sell me; but he had no scruples whatever about committing a much greater wrong against the helpless young girl placed under his guardianship, as his daughter's property. Sometimes my persecutor would ask me whether I would like to be sold. I told him I would rather be sold to any body than to lead such a life as I did. On such occasions

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he would assume the air of a very injured individual, and reproach me for my ingratitude. "Did I not take you into the house, and make you the companion of my own children?" he would say. "Have I ever treated you like a negro? I have never allowed you to be punished, not even to please your mistress. And this is the recompense I get, you ungrateful girl!" I answered that he had reasons of his own for screening me from punishment, and that the course he pursued

made my mistress hate me and persecute me. If I wept, he would say, "Poor child! Don't cry! don't cry! I will make peace for you with your mistress. Only let me arrange matters in my own way. Poor, foolish girl! you don't know what is for your own good. I would cherish you. I would make a lady of you. Now go, and think of all I have promised you."

I did think of it.

Reader, I draw no imaginary pictures of southern homes. I am telling you the plain truth. Yet when victims make their escape from this wild beast of Slavery, northerners consent to act the part of bloodhounds, and hunt the poor fugitive back into his den, "full of dead men's bones, and all uncleanness."

Nay, more, they are not only willing, but proud, to give their daughters in marriage to slaveholders. The poor girls have romantic notions of a sunny clime, and of the flowering vines that all the year round shade a happy home. To what disappointments are they destined! The

young wife soon learns
that the husband in
whose hands she has
placed her happiness
pays no regard to his
marriage vows.
Children of every shade

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of complexion play
with her own fair
babies, and too well she
knows that they are
born unto him of his
own household.
Jealousy and hatred
enter the flowery
home, and it is ravaged
of its loveliness.

Southern women often
marry a man knowing
that he is the father of
many little slaves. They
do not trouble
themselves about it.

They regard such
children as property, as
marketable as the pigs
on the plantation; and
it is seldom that they
do not make them
aware of this by
passing them into the
slavetrader's hands as
soon as possible, and
thus getting them out
of their sight. I am glad
to say there are some
honorable exceptions.

I have myself known
two southern wives
who exhorted their

husbands to free those slaves towards whom they stood in a "parental relation;" and their request was granted. These husbands blushed before the superior nobleness of their wives' natures. Though they had only counselled them to do that which it was their duty to do, it commanded their respect, and rendered their conduct more exemplary. Concealment was at an end, and confidence took the place of distrust.

Though this bad institution deadens the moral sense, even in white women, to a fearful extent, it is not altogether extinct. I have heard southern ladies say of Mr. Such a one, "He not only thinks it no disgrace to be the father of those little niggers, but he is not ashamed to call himself their master. I declare, such things ought not to be tolerated in any decent society!"

VII.

THE LOVER.

Why does the slave
ever love? Why allow
the tendrils of the heart
to twine around objects
which may at any
moment be wrenched
away by the hand of
violence? When
separations come by
the hand of death, the
pious soul can bow in
resignation, and say,
"Not my will, but thine
be done, O Lord!" But
when the ruthless hand
of man strikes the blow,
regardless of the
misery he causes, it is
hard to be submissive. I
did not reason thus
when I was a young
girl. Youth will be
youth. I loved, and I
indulged the hope that
the dark clouds around
me would turn out a
bright lining. I forgot
that in the land of my
birth the shadows are
too dense for light to
penetrate. A land

"Where laughter is not mirth;
nor thought the mind;
Nor words a language; nor
e'en men mankind.
Where cries reply to curses,
shrieks to blows,

And each is tortured in his
separate hell."

There was in the
neighborhood a young
colored carpenter; a
free born man. We had
been well acquainted in
childhood, and
frequently met
together afterwards.
We became mutually
attached, and he
proposed to marry me.
I loved him with all the
ardor of a young girl's
first love. But when I
reflected that I was a
slave, and that the laws
gave no sanction to the
marriage of such, my
heart sank within me.
My lover wanted to buy
me; but I knew that Dr.
Flint

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was too wilful and
arbitrary a man to
consent to that
arrangement. From
him, I was sure of
experiencing all sorts
of opposition, and I had
nothing to hope from
my mistress. She would
have been delighted to
have got rid of me, but
not in that way. It
would have relieved
her mind of a burden if
she could have seen me
sold to some distant
state, but if I was

married near home I should be just as much in her husband's power as I had previously been,--for the husband of a slave has no power to protect her.

Moreover, my mistress, like many others, seemed to think that slaves had no right to any family ties of their own; that they were created merely to wait upon the family of the mistress. I once heard her abuse a young slave girl, who told her that a colored man wanted to make her his wife. "I will have you peeled and pickled, my lady," said she, "if I ever hear you mention that subject again. Do you suppose that I will have you tending my children with the children of that nigger?" The girl to whom she said this had a mulatto child, of course not acknowledged by its father. The poor black man who loved her would have been proud to acknowledge his helpless offspring.

Many and anxious were the thoughts I revolved in my mind. I was at a loss what to do. Above all things, I was desirous to spare my

lover the insults that had cut so deeply into my own soul. I talked with my grandmother about it, and partly told her my fears. I did not dare to tell her the worst. She had long suspected all was not right, and if I confirmed her suspicions I knew a storm would rise that would prove the overthrow of all my hopes.

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This love-dream had been my support through many trials; and I could not bear to run the risk of having it suddenly dissipated. There was a lady in the neighborhood, a particular friend of Dr. Flint's, who often visited the house. I had a great respect for her, and she had always manifested a friendly interest in me. Grandmother thought she would have great influence with the doctor. I went to this lady, and told her my story. I told her I was aware that my lover's being a free-born man would prove a great objection; but he wanted to buy me; and

if Dr. Flint would consent to that arrangement, I felt sure he would be willing to pay any reasonable price. She knew that Mrs. Flint disliked me; therefore, I ventured to suggest that perhaps my mistress would approve of my being sold, as that would rid her of me. The lady listened with kindly sympathy, and promised to do her utmost to promote my wishes. She had an interview with the doctor, and I believe she pleaded my cause earnestly; but it was all to no purpose.

How I dreaded my master now! Every minute I expected to be summoned to his presence; but the day passed, and I heard nothing from him. The next morning, a message was brought to me: "Master wants you in his study." I found the door ajar, and I stood a moment gazing at the hateful man who claimed a right to rule me, body and soul. I entered, and tried to appear calm. I did not want him to know how my heart was bleeding. He

looked fixedly at me,
with an expression
which seemed to say, "I
have half a mind to kill
you on the spot." At last
he broke the silence,
and that was a relief to
both of us.

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"So you want to be
married, do you?" said
he, "and to a free
nigger."

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I'll soon convince
you whether I am your
master, or the nigger
fellow you honor so
highly. If you must have
a husband, you may
take up with one of my
slaves."

What a situation I
should be in, as the
wife of one of his
slaves, even if my heart
had been interested!

I replied, "Don't you
suppose, sir, that a
slave can have some
preference about
marrying? Do you
suppose that all men
are alike to her?"

"Do you love this
nigger?" said he,
abruptly.

"Yes, sir."

"How dare you tell me so!" he exclaimed, in great wrath. After a slight pause, he added, "I supposed you thought more of yourself; that you felt above the insults of such puppies."

"I replied, "If he is a puppy I am a puppy, for we are both of the negro race. It is right and honorable for us to love each other. The man you call a puppy never insulted me, sir; and he would not love me if he did not believe me to be a virtuous woman."

He sprang upon me like a tiger, and gave me a stunning blow. It was the first time he had ever struck me; and fear did not enable me to control my anger. When I had recovered a little from the effects, I exclaimed, "You have struck me for answering you honestly. How I despise you!"

There was silence for some minutes. Perhaps he was deciding what should be my punishment; or, perhaps, he wanted to

give me time to reflect
on what I

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had said, and to whom I
had said it. Finally, he
asked, "Do you know
what you have said?"

"Yes, sir; but your
treatment drove me to
it."

"Do you know that I
have a right to do as I
like with you,--that I
can kill you, if I
please?"

"You have tried to kill
me, and I wish you had;
but you have no right to
do as you like with me."

"Silence!" he exclaimed,
in a thundering voice.

"By heavens, girl, you
forget yourself too far!
Are you mad? If you
are, I will soon bring
you to your senses. Do
you think any other
master would bear
what I have borne from
you this morning?
Many masters would
have killed you on the
spot. How would you
like to be sent to jail for
your insolence?"

"I know I have been
disrespectful, sir," I
replied; "but you drove

me to it; I couldn't help it. As for the jail, there would be more peace for me there than there is here."

"You deserve to go there," said he, "and to be under such treatment, that you would forget the meaning of the word peace. It would do you good. It would take some of your high notions out of you. But I am not ready to send you there yet, notwithstanding your ingratitude for all my kindness and for bearance. You have been the plague of my life. I have wanted to make you happy, and I have been repaid with the basest ingratitude; but though you have proved yourself incapable of appreciating my kindness, I will be lenient towards you, Linda. I will give you one more chance to redeem your character. If you behave yourself and do as I require, I will forgive you and treat you as I always have done; but if you

disobey me, I will
punish you as I would
the meanest slave on
my plantation. Never
let me hear that
fellow's name
mentioned again. If I
ever know of your
speaking to him, I will
cowhide you both; and
if I catch him lurking
about my premises, I
will shoot him as soon
as I would a dog. Do
you hear what I say? I'll
teach you a lesson
about marriage and
free niggers! Now go,
and let this be the last
time I have occasion to
speak to you on this
subject."

Reader, did you ever
hate? I hope not. I
never did but once; and
I trust I never shall
again. Somebody has
called it "the
atmosphere of hell;"
and I believe it is so.

For a fortnight the
doctor did not speak to
me. He thought to
mortify me; to make
me feel that I had
disgraced myself by
receiving the honorable
addresses of a
respectable colored
man, in preference to
the base proposals of a
white man. But though
his lips disdained to
address me, his eyes

were very loquacious.
No animal ever
watched its prey more
narrowly than he
watched me. He knew
that I could write,
though he had failed to
make me read his
letters; and he was now
troubled lest I should
exchange letters with
another man. After a
while he became weary
of silence; and I was
sorry for it. One
morning, as he passed
through the hall, to
leave the house, he
contrived to thrust a
note into my hand. I
thought I had better
read it, and spare
myself the vexation of
having him read it to
me. It expressed regret
for the blow he had
given me, and
reminded me that I
myself was wholly to
blame for it. He hoped I
had become convinced
of the injury I was
doing myself by
incurring

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his displeasure. He
wrote that he had made
up his mind to go to
Louisiana; that he
should take several
slaves with him, and
intended I should be

one of the number. My mistress would remain where she was; therefore I should have nothing to fear from that quarter. If I merited kindness from him, he assured me that it would be lavishly bestowed. He begged me to think over the matter, and answer the following day.

The next morning I was called to carry a pair of scissors to his room. I laid them on the table, with the letter beside them. He thought it was my answer, and did not call me back. I went as usual to attend my young mistress to and from school. He met me in the street, and ordered me to stop at his office on my way back. When I entered, he showed me his letter, and asked me why I had not answered it. I replied, "I am your daughter's property, and it is in your power to send me, or take me, wherever you please." He said he was very glad to find me so willing to go, and that we should start early in the autumn. He had a large practice in the town, and I rather thought he had made

up the story merely to frighten me. However that might be, I was determined that I would never go to Louisiana with him.

Summer passed away, and early in the autumn Dr. Flint's eldest son was sent to Louisiana to examine the country, with a view to emigrating. That news did not disturb me. I knew very well that I should not be sent with him. That I had not been taken to the plantation before this time, was owing to the fact that his son was there. He was jealous of his son; and jealousy of the overseer had kept him from punishing me by

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sending me into the fields to work. Is it strange that I was not proud of these protectors? As for the overseer, he was a man for whom I had less respect than I had for a bloodhound.

Young Mr. Flint did not bring back a favorable report of Louisiana, and I heard no more of that scheme. Soon after

this, my lover met me
at the corner of the
street, and I stopped to
speak to him. Looking
up, I saw my master
watching us from his
window. I hurried
home, trembling with
fear. I was sent for,
immediately, to go to
his room. He met me
with a blow. "When is
mistress to be
married?" said he, in a
sneering tone. A
shower of oaths and
imprecations followed.
How thankful I was
that my lover was a
free man! that my
tyrant had no power to
flog him for speaking to
me in the street!

Again and again I
revolved in my mind
how all this would end.
There was no hope that
the doctor would
consent to sell me on
any terms. He had an
iron will, and was
determined to keep me,
and to conquer me. My
lover was an intelligent
and religious man.
Even if he could have
obtained permission to
marry me while I was a
slave, the marriage
would give him no
power to protect me
from my master. It
would have made him
miserable to witness

the insults I should
have been subjected to.
And then, if we had
children, I knew they
must "follow the
condition of the
mother." What a
terrible blight that
would be on the heart
of a free, intelligent
father! For his sake, I
felt that I ought not to
link his fate with my
own unhappy destiny.
He was going to
Savannah to see about
a little property left
him by an uncle; and

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hard as it was to bring
my feelings to it, I
earnestly entreated
him not to come back. I
advised him to go to
the Free States, where
his tongue would not
be tied, and where his
intelligence would be
of more avail to him. He
left me, still hoping the
day would come when I
could be bought. With
me the lamp of hope
had gone out. The
dream of my girlhood
was over. I felt lonely
and desolate.

Still I was not stripped
of all. I still had my
good grandmother, and
my affectionate
brother. When he put

his arms round my neck, and looked into my eyes, as if to read there the troubles I dared not tell, I felt that I still had something to love. But even that pleasant emotion was chilled by the reflection that he might be torn from me at any moment, by some sudden freak of my master. If he had known how we loved each other, I think he would have exulted in separating us. We often planned together how we could get to the north. But, as William remarked, such things are easier said than done. My movements were very closely watched, and we had no means of getting any money to defray our expenses. As for grandmother, she was strongly opposed to her children's undertaking any such project. She had not forgotten poor Benjamin's sufferings, and she was afraid that if another child tried to escape, he would have a similar or a worse fate. To me, nothing seemed more dreadful than my present life. I said to myself, "William must be free. He shall go to the north, and I

will follow him." Many a slave sister has formed the same plans.

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**VIII.
WHAT SLAVES ARE
TAUGHT TO THINK
OF
THE NORTH.**

Slaveholders pride themselves upon being honorable men; but if you were to hear the enormous lies they tell their slaves, you would have small respect for their veracity. I have spoken plain English. Pardon me. I cannot use a milder term. When they visit the north, and return home, they tell their slaves of the runaways they have seen, and describe them to be in the most deplorable condition. A slaveholder once told me that he had seen a runaway friend of mine in New York, and that she besought him to take her back to her master, for she was literally dying of starvation; that many days she had only one

cold potato to eat, and at other times could get nothing at all. He said he refused to take her, because he knew her master would not thank him for bringing such a miserable wretch to his house. He ended by saying to me, "This is the punishment she brought on herself for running away from a kind master."

This whole story was false. I afterwards staid with that friend in New York, and found her in comfortable circumstances. She had never thought of such a thing as wishing to go back to slavery. Many of the slaves believe such stories, and think it is not worth while to exchange slavery for such a hard kind of freedom. It is difficult to persuade such that freedom

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could make them useful men, and enable them to protect their wives and children. If those heathen in our Christian land had as much teaching as some Hindoos, they would think otherwise. They would know that

liberty is more valuable than life. They would begin to understand their own capabilities, and exert themselves to become men and women.

But while the Free States sustain a law which hurls fugitives back into slavery, how can the slaves resolve to become men? There are some who strive to protect wives and daughters from the insults of their masters; but those who have such sentiments have had advantages above the general mass of slaves. They have been partially civilized and Christianized by favorable circumstances. Some are bold enough to utter such sentiments to their masters. O, that there were more of them!

Some poor creatures have been so brutalized by the lash that they will sneak out of the way to give their masters free access to their wives and daughters. Do you think this proves the black man to belong to an inferior order of beings? What would you be, if you had been

born and brought up a
slave, with generations
of slaves for ancestors?
I admit that the black
man is inferior. But
what is it that makes
him so? It is the
ignorance in which
white men compel him
to live; it is the
torturing whip that
lashes manhood out of
him; it is the fierce
bloodhounds of the
South, and the scarcely
less cruel human
bloodhounds of the
north, who enforce the
Fugitive Slave Law.
They do the work.

Southern gentlemen
indulge in the most
contemptuous

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expressions about the
Yankees, while they, on
their part, consent to
do the vilest work for
them, such as the
ferocious bloodhounds
and the despised
negrohunters are
employed to do at
home. When
southerners go to the
north, they are proud
to do them honor; but
the northern man is
not welcome south of
Mason and Dixon's line,
unless he suppresses

every thought and feeling at variance with their "peculiar institution." Nor is it enough to be silent. The masters are not pleased, unless they obtain a greater degree of subservience than that; and they are generally accommodated. Do they respect the northerner for this? I trow not. Even the slaves despise "a northern man with southern principles;" and that is the class they generally see. When northerners go to the south to reside, they prove very apt scholars. They soon imbibe the sentiments and disposition of their neighbors, and generally go beyond their teachers. Of the two, they are proverbially the hardest masters. They seem to satisfy their consciences with the doctrine that God created the Africans to be slaves. What a libel upon the heavenly Father, who "made of one blood all nations of men!" And then who are Africans? Who can measure the amount of Anglo-Saxon blood

coursing in the veins of
American slaves?

I have spoken of the
pains slaveholders take
to give their slaves a
bad opinion of the
north; but,
notwithstanding this,
intelligent slaves are
aware that they have
many friends in the
Free States. Even the
most ignorant have
some confused notions
about it. They knew
that I could read; and I
was often asked if I had
seen any thing in the
newspapers about
white folks

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over in the big north,
who were trying to get
their freedom for them.
Some believe that the
abolitionists have
already made them
free, and that it is
established by law, but
that their masters
prevent the law from
going into effect. One
woman begged me to
get a newspaper and
read it over. She said
her husband told her
that the black people
had sent word to the
queen of 'Merica that
they were all slaves;
that she didn't believe

it, and went to Washington city to see the president about it. They quarrelled; she drew her sword upon him, and swore that he should help her to make them all free.

That poor, ignorant woman thought that America was governed by a Queen, to whom the President was subordinate. I wish the President was subordinate to Queen Justice.

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IX. SKETCHES OF NEIGHBORING SLAVEHOLDERS.

There was a planter in the country, not far from us, whom I will call Mr. Litch. He was an ill-bred, uneducated man, but very wealthy. He had six hundred slaves, many of whom he did not know by sight. His extensive plantation was managed by well-paid overseers. There was a jail and a whipping post on his grounds; and whatever cruelties

were perpetrated there, they passed without comment. He was so effectually screened by his great wealth that he was called to no account for his crimes, not even for murder.

Various were the punishments resorted to. A favorite one was to tie a rope round a man's body, and suspend him from the ground. A fire was kindled over him, from which was suspended a piece of fat pork. As this cooked, the scalding drops of fat continually fell on the bare flesh. On his own plantation, he required very strict obedience to the eighth commandment. But depredations on the neighbors were allowable, provided the culprit managed to evade detection or suspicion. If a neighbor brought a charge of theft against any of his slaves, he was browbeaten by the master, who assured him that his slaves had enough of every thing at home, and had no inducement to steal. No sooner was the neighbor's back turned,

than the accused was
sought out, and
whipped

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for his lack of
discretion. If a slave
stole from him even a
pound of meat or a
peck of corn, if
detection followed, he
was put in chains and
imprisoned, and so
kept till his form was
attenuated by hunger
and suffering.

A freshet once bore his
wine cellar and meat
house miles away from
the plantation. Some
slaves followed, and
secured bits of meat
and bottles of wine.
Two were detected; a
ham and some liquor
being found in their
huts. They were
summoned by their
master. No words were
used, but a club felled
them to the ground. A
rough box was their
coffin, and their
interment was a dog's
burial. Nothing was
said.

Murder was so
common on his
plantation that he
feared to be alone after
nightfall. He might have
believed in ghosts.

His brother, if not equal in wealth, was at least equal in cruelty. His bloodhounds were well trained. Their pen was spacious, and a terror to the slaves. They were let loose on a runaway, and, if they tracked him, they literally tore the flesh from his bones. When this slaveholder died, his shrieks and groans were so frightful that they appalled his own friends. His last words were, "I am going to hell; bury my money with me."

After death his eyes remained open. To press the lids down, silver dollars were laid on them. These were buried with him. From this circumstances, a rumor went abroad that his coffin was filled with money. Three times his grave was opened, and his coffin taken out. The last time, his body was found on the ground, and a flock of buzzards were pecking

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at it. He was again interred, and a sentinel set over his grave. The

perpetrators were never discovered.

Cruelty is contagious in uncivilized communities. Mr.

Conant, a neighbor of Mr. Litch, returned from town one evening in a partial state of intoxication. His body servant gave him some offence. He was divested of his clothes, except his shirt, whipped, and tied to a large tree in front of the house. It was a stormy night in winter. The wind blew bitterly cold, and the boughs of the old tree crackled under falling sleet. A member of the family, fearing he would freeze to death, begged that he might be taken down; but the master would not relent. He remained there three hours; and, when he was cut down, he was more dead than alive.

Another slave, who stole a pig from this master, to appease his hunger, was terribly flogged. In desperation, he tried to run away. But at the end of two miles, he was so faint with loss of blood, he thought he was dying. He had a wife, and he longed to see her once more. Too sick to walk,

he crept back that long distance on his hands and knees. When he reached his master's, it was night. He had not strength to rise and open the gate. He moaned, and tried to call for help. I had a friend living in the same family. At last his cry reached her. She went out and found the prostrate man at the gate. She ran back to the house for assistance, and two men returned with her. They carried him in, and laid him on the floor. The back of his shirt was one clot of blood. By means of lard, my friend loosened it from the raw flesh. She bandaged him, gave him cool drink, and left him to rest. The master said he deserved

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a hundred more lashes. When his own labor was stolen from him, he had stolen food to appease his hunger. This was his crime. Another neighbor was a Mrs. Wade. At no hour of the day was there cessation of the lash on her premises.

Her labors began with the dawn, and did not cease till long after nightfall. The barn was her particular place of torture. There she lashed the slaves with the might of a man. An old slave of hers once said to me, "It is hell in missis's house. 'Pears I can never get out. Day and night I prays to die."

The mistress died before the old woman, and, when dying, entreated her husband not to permit any one of her slaves to look on her after death. A slave who had nursed her children, and had still a child in her care, watched her chance, and stole with it in her arms to the room where lay her dead mistress. She gazed a while on her, then raised her hand and dealt two blows on her face, saying, as she did so, "The devil is got you now! " She forgot that the child was looking on. She had just begun to talk; and she said to her father, "I did see ma, and mammy did strike ma, so," striking her own face with her little hand. The master was startled. He could

not imagine how the nurse could obtain access to the room where the corpse lay; for he kept the door locked. He questioned her. She confessed that what the child had said was true, and told how she had procured the key. She was sold to Georgia.

In my childhood I knew a valuable slave, named Charity, and loved her, as all children did. Her young mistress married, and took her to Louisiana. Her

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little boy, James, was sold to a good sort of master. He became involved in debt, and James was sold again to a wealthy slaveholder, noted for his cruelty. With this man he grew up to manhood, receiving the treatment of a dog. After a severe whipping, to save himself from further infliction of the lash, with which he was threatened, he took to the woods. He was in a most miserable condition--cut by the cowskin, half naked, half starved, and

without the means of procuring a crust of bread.

Some weeks after his escape, he was captured, tied, and carried back to his master's plantation. This man considered punishment in his jail, on bread and water, after receiving hundreds of lashes, too mild for the poor slave's offence. Therefore he decided, after the overseer should have whipped him to his satisfaction, to have him placed between the screws of the cotton gin, to stay as long as he had been in the woods. This wretched creature was cut with the whip from his head to his feet, then washed with strong brine, to prevent the flesh from mortifying, and make it heal sooner than it otherwise would. He was then put into the cotton gin, which was screwed down, only allowing him room to turn on his side when he could not lie on his back. Every morning a slave was sent with a piece of bread and bowl of water, which were placed within reach of the poor

fellow. The slave was charged, under penalty of severe punishment, not to speak to him.

Four days passed, and the slave continued to carry the bread and water. On the second morning, he found the bread gone, but the water untouched.

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When he had been in the press four days and five nights, the slave informed his master that the water had not been used for four mornings, and that a horrible stench came from the gin house. The overseer was sent to examine into it. When the press was unscrewed, the dead body was found partly eaten by rats and vermin. Perhaps the rats that devoured his bread had gnawed him before life was extinct. Poor Charity!

Grandmother and I often asked each other how her affectionate heart would bear the news, if she should ever hear of the murder of her son. We had known her husband, and knew

that James was like him
in manliness and
intelligence. These
were the qualities that
made it so hard for him
to be a plantation slave.
They put him into a
rough box, and buried
him with less feeling
than would have been
manifested for an old
house dog. Nobody
asked any questions.
He was a slave; and the
feeling was that the
master had a right to
do what he pleased
with his own property.
And what did he care
for the value of a slave?
He had hundreds of
them. When they had
finished their daily toil,
they must hurry to eat
their little morsels, and
be ready to extinguish
their pine knots before
nine o'clock, when the
overseer went his
patrol rounds. He
entered every cabin, to
see that men and their
wives had gone to bed
together, lest the men,
from over-fatigue,
should fall asleep in the
chimney corner, and
remain there till the
morning horn called
them to their daily task.
Women are considered
of no value, unless they
continually increase
their owner's stock.
They are put on a par

with animals. This same master shot a woman through the head, who

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had run away and been brought back to him. No one called him to account for it. If a slave resisted being whipped, the bloodhounds were unpacked, and set upon him, to tear his flesh from his bones. The master who did these things was highly educated, and styled a perfect gentleman. He also boasted the name and standing of a Christian, though Satan never had a truer follower.

I could tell of more slaveholders as cruel as those I have described. They are not exceptions to the general rule. I do not say there are no humane slaveholders. Such characters do exist, notwithstanding the hardening influences around them. But they are "like angels' visits--few and far between."

I knew a young lady who was one of these rare specimens. She

was an orphan, and inherited as slaves a woman and her six children. Their father was a free man. They had a comfortable home of their own, parents and children living together. The mother and eldest daughter served their mistress during the day, and at night returned to their dwelling, which was on the premises. The young lady was very pious, and there was some reality in her religion. She taught her slaves to lead pure lives, and wished them to enjoy the fruit of their own industry. Her religion was not a garb put on for Sunday, and laid aside till Sunday returned again. The eldest daughter of the slave mother was promised in marriage to a free man; and the day before the wedding this good mistress emancipated her, in order that her marriage might have the sanction of law.

Report said that this young lady cherished an unrequited

affection for a man who had resolved to marry for wealth. In the course of time a rich uncle of hers died. He left six thousand dollars to his two sons by a colored woman, and the remainder of his property to this orphan niece. The metal soon attracted the magnet. The lady and her weighty purse became his. She offered to manumit her slaves--telling them that her marriage might make unexpected changes in their destiny, and she wished to insure their happiness. They refused to take their freedom, saying that she had always been their best friend, and they could not be so happy any where as with her. I was not surprised. I had often seen them in their comfortable home, and thought that the whole town did not contain a happier family. They had never felt slavery; and, when it was too late, they were convinced of its reality. When the new master claimed this family as his property, the father became furious, and

went to his mistress for protection. "I can do nothing for you now, Harry," said she. "I no longer have the power I had a week ago. I have succeeded in obtaining the freedom of your wife; but I cannot obtain it for your children." The unhappy father swore that nobody should take his children from him. He concealed them in the woods for some days; but they were discovered and taken. The father was put in jail, and the two oldest boys sold to Georgia. One little girl, too young to be of service to her master, was left with the wretched mother. The other three were carried to their master's plantation. The eldest soon became a mother; and, when the slaveholder's wife looked at

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the babe, she wept bitterly. She knew that her own husband had violated the purity she had so carefully inculcated. She had a second child by her master, and then he

sold her and his
offspring to his brother.
She bore two children
to the brother, and was
sold again. The next
sister went crazy. The
life she was compelled
to lead drove her mad.
The third one became
the mother of five
daughters. Before the
birth of the fourth the
pious mistress died. To
the last, she rendered
every kindness to the
slaves that her
unfortunate
circumstances
permitted. She passed
away peacefully, glad to
close her eyes on a life
which had been made
so wretched by the
man she loved.

This man squandered
the fortune he had
received, and sought to
retrieve his affairs by a
second marriage; but,
having retired after a
night of drunken
debauch, he was found
dead in the morning.
He was called a good
master; for he fed and
clothed his slaves
better than most
masters, and the lash
was not heard on his
plantation so
frequently as on many
others. Had it not been
for slavery, he would
have been a better

man, and his wife a
happier woman.

No pen can give an
adequate description of
the all pervading
corruption produced
by slavery. The slave
girl is reared in an
atmosphere of
licentiousness and fear.
The lash and the foul
talk of her master and
his sons are her
teachers. When she is
fourteen or fifteen, her
owner, or his sons, or
the overseer, or
perhaps all of them,
begin to bribe her with
presents. If these fail to
accomplish their
purpose, she is
whipped or starved
into submission to
their will. She may have
had religious principles
inculcated by some
pious

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mother or
grandmother, or some
good mistress; she may
have a lover, whose
good opinion and
peace of mind are dear
to her heart; or the
profligate men who
have power over her
may be exceedingly
odious to her. But
resistance is hopeless.

"The poor worm
Shall prove her contest
vain. Life's little day
Shall pass, and she is
gone!"

The slaveholder's sons
are, of course, vitiated,
even while boys, by the
unclean influences
every where around
them. Nor do the
master's daughters
always escape. Severe
retributions sometimes
come upon him for the
wrongs he does to the
daughters of the slaves.
The white daughters
early hear their parents
quarrelling about some
female slave. Their
curiosity is excited, and
they soon learn the
cause. They are
attended by the young
slave girls whom their
father has corrupted;
and they hear such talk
as should never meet
youthful ears, or any
other ears. They know
that the women slaves
are subject to their
father's authority in all
things; and in some
cases they exercise the
same authority over
the men slaves. I have
myself seen the master
of such a household
whose head was bowed
down in shame; for it
was known in the
neighborhood that his

daughter had selected
one of the meanest
slaves on his plantation
to be the father of his
first grandchild. She
did not make her
advances to her equals,
nor even to her father's
more intelligent
servants. She selected
the most brutalized,
over whom her
authority could be
exercised with less fear
of exposure. Her father,
half frantic with rage,
sought to revenge
himself on the
offending black man;

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but his daughter,
foreseeing the storm
that would arise, had
given him free papers,
and sent him out of the
state.

In such cases the infant
is smothered, or sent
where it is never seen
by any who know its
history. But if the white
parent is the father,
instead of the mother,
the offspring are
unblushingly reared for
the market. If they are
girls, I have indicated
plainly enough what
will be their inevitable
destiny.

You may believe what I say; for I write only that whereof I know. I was twenty-one years in that cage of obscene birds. I can testify, from my own experience and observation, that slavery is a curse to the whites as well as to the blacks. It makes the white fathers cruel and sensual; the sons violent and licentious; it contaminates the daughters, and makes the wives wretched. And as for the colored race, it needs an abler pen than mine to describe the extremity of their sufferings, the depth of their degradation.

Yet few slaveholders seem to be aware of the widespread moral ruin occasioned by this wicked system. Their talk is of blighted cotton crops--not of the blight on their children's souls.

If you want to be fully convinced of the abominations of slavery, go on a southern plantation, and call yourself a negro trader. Then there will be no concealment; and you will see and hear things that will seem to you

impossible among
human beings with
immortal souls.

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X.
A PERILOUS
PASSAGE IN THE
SLAVE GIRL'S LIFE.

After my lover went away, Dr. Flint contrived a new plan. He seemed to have an idea that my fear of my mistress was his greatest obstacle. In the blandest tones, he told me that he was going to build a small house for me, in a secluded place, four miles away from the town. I shuddered; but I was constrained to listen, while he talked of his intention to give me a home of my own, and to make a lady of me. Hitherto, I had escaped my dreaded fate, by being in the midst of people. My grandmother had already had high words with my master about me. She had told him pretty plainly what she thought of his character, and there was considerable gossip in the

neighborhood about
our affairs, to which the
open-mouthed jealousy
of Mrs. Flint
contributed not a little.
When my master said
he was going to build a
house for me, and that
he could do it with
little trouble and
expense, I was in hopes
something would
happen to frustrate his
scheme; but I soon
heard that the house
was actually begun. I
vowed before my
Maker that I would
never enter it. I had
rather toil on the
plantation from dawn
till dark; I had rather
live and die in jail, than
drag on, from day to
day, through such a
living death. I was
determined that the
master, whom I so
hated and loathed, who
had blighted the
prospects of my youth,
and made

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my life a desert, should
not, after my long
struggle with him,
succeed at last in
trampling his victim
under his feet. I would
do any thing, every
thing, for the sake of
defeating him. What
could I do? I thought
and thought, till I

became desperate, and made a plunge into the abyss.

And now, reader, I come to a period in my unhappy life, which I would gladly forget if I could. The remembrance fills me with sorrow and shame. It pains me to tell you of it; but I have promised to tell you the truth, and I will do it honestly, let it cost me what it may. I will not try to screen myself behind the plea of compulsion from a master; for it was not so. Neither can I plead ignorance or thoughtlessness. For years, my master had done his utmost to pollute my mind with foul images, and to destroy the pure principles inculcated by my grandmother, and the good mistress of my childhood. The influences of slavery had had the same effect on me that they had on other young girls; they had made me prematurely knowing, concerning the evil ways of the world. I knew what I did, and I did it with deliberate calculation.

But, O, ye happy
women, whose purity
has been sheltered
from childhood, who
have been free to
choose the objects of
your affection, whose
homes are protected by
law, do not judge the
poor desolate slave girl
too severely! If slavery
had been abolished, I,
also, could have
married the man of my
choice; I could have
had a home shielded by
the laws; and I should
have been spared the
painful task of
confessing what I am
now about to relate;
but all my prospects
had been blighted

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by slavery. I wanted to
keep myself pure; and,
under the most adverse
circumstances, I tried
hard to preserve my
self-respect; but I was
struggling alone in the
powerful grasp of the
demon Slavery; and the
monster proved too
strong for me. I felt as if
I was forsaken by God
and man; as if all my
efforts must be
frustrated; and I
became reckless in my
despair.

I have told you that Dr. Flint's persecutions and his wife's jealousy had given rise to some gossip in the neighborhood. Among others, it chanced that a white unmarried gentleman had obtained some knowledge of the circumstances in which I was placed. He knew my grandmother, and often spoke to me in the street. He became interested for me, and asked questions about my master, which I answered in part. He expressed a great deal of sympathy, and a wish to aid me. He constantly sought opportunities to see me, and wrote to me frequently. I was a poor slave girl, only fifteen years old.

So much attention from a superior person was, of course, flattering; for human nature is the same in all. I also felt grateful for his sympathy, and encouraged by his kind words. It seemed to me a great thing to have such a friend. By degrees, a more tender feeling crept into my heart. He was an educated and eloquent

gentleman; too
eloquent, alas, for the
poor slave girl who
trusted in him. Of
course I saw whither
all this was tending. I
knew the impassable
gulf between us; but to
be an object of interest
to a man who is not
married, and who is
not her master, is
agreeable to the pride
and feelings of a slave,
if her miserable
situation has left her
any pride or sentiment.
It seems less degrading

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to give one's self, than
to submit to
compulsion. There is
something akin to
freedom in having a
lover who has no
control over you,
except that which he
gains by kindness and
attachment. A master
may treat you as rudely
as he pleases, and you
dare not speak;
moreover, the wrong
does not seem so great
with an unmarried
man, as with one who
has a wife to be made
unhappy. There may be
sophistry in all this; but
the condition of a slave
confuses all principles
of morality, and, in fact,

renders the practice of them impossible.

When I found that my master had actually begun to build the lonely cottage, other feelings mixed with those I have described. Revenge, and calculations of interest, were added to flattered vanity and sincere gratitude for kindness. I knew nothing would enrage Dr. Flint so much as to know that I favored another; and it was something to triumph over my tyrant even in that small way. I thought he would revenge himself by selling me, and I was sure my friend, Mr. Sands, would buy me. He was a man of more generosity and feeling than my master, and I thought my freedom could be easily obtained from him. The crisis of my fate now came so near that I was desperate. I shuddered to think of being the mother of children that should be owned by my old tyrant. I knew that as soon as a new fancy took him, his victims were sold far off to get rid of them; especially if they had children. I had seen several women sold, with his

babies at the breast. He never allowed his offspring by slaves to remain long in sight of himself and his wife. Of a man who was not my master I could ask to have my children well supported; and in

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this case, I felt confident I should obtain the boon. I also felt quite sure that they would be made free. With all these thoughts revolving in my mind, and seeing no other way of escaping the doom I so much dreaded, I made a headlong plunge. Pity me, and pardon me, O virtuous reader! You never knew what it is to be a slave; to be entirely unprotected by law or custom; to have the laws reduce you to the condition of a chattel, entirely subject to the will of another. You never exhausted your ingenuity in avoiding the snares, and eluding the power of a hated tyrant; you never shuddered at the sound of his footsteps, and trembled within hearing of his voice. I know I did wrong. No

one can feel it more sensibly than I do. The painful and humiliating memory will haunt me to my dying day. Still, in looking back, calmly, on the events of my life, I feel that the slave woman ought not to be judged by the same standard as others.

The months passed on. I had many unhappy hours. I secretly mourned over the sorrow I was bringing on my grandmother, who had so tried to shield me from harm. I knew that I was the greatest comfort of her old age, and that it was a source of pride to her that I had not degraded myself, like most of the slaves. I wanted to confess to her that I was no longer worthy of her love; but I could not utter the dreaded words.

As for Dr. Flint, I had a feeling of satisfaction and triumph in the thought of telling him. From time to time he told me of his intended arrangements, and I was silent. At last, he came and told me the cottage was completed, and ordered me to go to it. I told him I would

never enter it. He said,
"I have heard

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enough of such talk as
that. You shall go, if you
are carried by force;
and you shall remain
there."

I replied, "I will never
go there. In a few
months I shall be a
mother."

He stood and looked at
me in dumb
amazement, and left
the house without a
word. I thought I
should be happy in my
triumph over him. But
now that the truth was
out, and my relatives
would hear of it, I felt
wretched. Humble as
were their
circumstances, they
had pride in my good
character. Now, how
could I look them in the
face? My self-respect
was gone! I had
resolved that I would
be virtuous, though I
was a slave. I had said,
"Let the storm beat! I
will brave it till I die."
And now, how
humiliated I felt!

I went to my
grandmother. My lips
moved to make

confession, but the words stuck in my throat. I sat down in the shade of a tree at her door and began to sew. I think she saw something unusual was the matter with me. The mother of slaves is very watchful. She knows there is no security for her children. After they have entered their teens she lives in daily expectation of trouble. This leads to many questions. If the girl is of a sensitive nature, timidity keeps her from answering truthfully, and this well-meant course has a tendency to drive her from maternal counsels. Presently, in came my mistress, like a mad woman, and accused me concerning her husband. My grandmother, whose suspicions had been previously awakened, believed what she said. She exclaimed, "O Linda! has it come to this? I had rather see you dead than to see you as you now are. You are a disgrace to your dead mother." She tore from my fingers

my mother's wedding
ring and her silver
thimble. "Go away!" she
exclaimed," and never
come to my house,
again." Her reproaches
fell so hot and heavy,
that they left me no
chance to answer.

Bitter tears, such as the
eyes never shed but
once, were my only
answer. I rose from my
seat, but fell back again,
sobbing. She did not
speak to me; but the
tears were running
down her furrowed
cheeks, and they
scorched me like fire.

She had always been so
kind to me! So kind!
How I longed to throw
myself at her feet, and
tell her all the truth!
But she had ordered
me to go, and never to
come there again. After
a few minutes, I
mustered strength, and
started to obey her.

With what feelings did
I now close that little
gate, which I used to
open with such an
eager hand in my
childhood! It closed
upon me with a sound I
never heard before.

Where could I go? I was
afraid to return to my
master's. I walked on
recklessly, not caring
where I went, or what

would become of me.
When I had gone four
or five miles, fatigue
compelled me to stop. I
sat down on the stump
of an old tree. The stars
were shining through
the boughs above me.
How they mocked me,
with their bright, calm
light! The hours passed
by, and as I sat there
alone a chilliness and
deadly sickness came
over me. I sank on the
ground. My mind was
full of horrid thoughts.
I prayed to die; but the
prayer was not
answered. At last, with
great effort I roused
myself, and walked
some distance further,
to the house of a
woman who had been a
friend of my mother.
When I told her why I
was there, she spoke
soothingly to me; but I
could not be comforted.
I

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thought I could bear
my shame if I could
only be reconciled to
my grandmother. I
longed to open my
heart to her. I thought if
she could know the real
state of the case, and all
I had been bearing for
years, she would

perhaps judge me less harshly. My friend advised me to send for her. I did so; but days of agonizing suspense passed before she came. Had she utterly forsaken me? No. She came at last. I knelt before her, and told her the things that had poisoned my life; how long I had been persecuted; that I saw no way of escape; and in an hour of extremity I had become desperate. She listened in silence. I told her I would bear any thing and do any thing, if in time I had hopes of obtaining her forgiveness. I begged of her to pity me, for my dead mother's sake. And she did pity me. She did not say, "I forgive you;" but she looked at me lovingly, with her eyes full of tears. She laid her old hand gently on my head, and murmured, "Poor child! Poor child!"

XI.
THE NEW TIE TO
LIFE.

I RETURNED to my good grandmother's house. She had an interview with Mr. Sands. When she asked him why he could not have left her one ewe lamb,--whether there were not plenty of slaves who did not care about character,--he made no answer; but he spoke kind and encouraging words. He promised to care for my child, and to buy me, be the conditions what they might.

I had not seen Dr. Flint for five days. I had never seen him since I made the avowal to him. He talked of the disgrace I had brought on myself; how I had sinned against my master, and mortified my old grandmother. He intimated that if I had accepted his proposals, he, as a physician, could have saved me from exposure. He even condescended to pity me. Could he have offered wormwood more bitter? He, whose

persecutions had been
the cause of my sin!

"Linda," said he,
"though you have been
criminal towards me, I
feel for you, and I can
pardon you if you obey
my wishes. Tell me
whether the fellow you
wanted to marry is the
father of your child. If
you deceive me, you
shall feel the fires of
hell."

I did not feel as proud
as I had done. My
strongest weapon with
him was gone. I was
lowered in my own
estimation, and had
resolved to bear his
abuse in silence. But
when he spoke
contemptuously of the

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lover who had always
treated me honorably;
when I remembered
that but for him I might
have been a virtuous,
free, and happy wife, I
lost my patience. "I
have sinned against
God and myself," I
replied; "but not
against you."

He clinched his teeth,
and muttered, "Curse
you!" He came towards
me, with ill-suppressed
rage, and exclaimed,
"You obstinate girl! I

could grind your bones
to powder! You have
thrown yourself away
on some worthless
rascal. You are
weak-minded, and have
been easily persuaded
by those who don't care
a straw for you. The
future will settle
accounts between us.
You are blinded now;
but hereafter you will
be convinced that your
master was your best
friend. My lenity
towards you is a proof
of it. I might have
punished you in many
ways. I might have had
you whipped till you
fell dead under the
lash. But I wanted you
to live; I would have
bettered your
condition. Others
cannot do it. You are
my slave. Your
mistress, disgusted by
your conduct, forbids
you to return to the
house; therefore I leave
you here for the
present; but I shall see
you often. I will call
tomorrow."

He came with frowning
brows, that showed a
dissatisfied state of
mind. After asking
about my health, he
inquired whether my
board was paid, and
who visited me. He

then went on to say
that he had neglected
his duty; that as a
physician there were
certain things that he
ought to have
explained to me. Then
followed talk such as
would have made the
most shameless blush.
He ordered me to stand
up before him. I
obeyed. "I command
you," said he, "to tell

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me whether the father
of your child is white or
black." I hesitated.
"Answer me this
instant!" he exclaimed.
I did answer. He sprang
upon me like a wolf,
and grabbed my arm as
if he would have
broken it. "Do you love
him?" said he, in a
hissing tone.
"I am thankful that I do
not despise him," I
replied.

He raised his hand to
strike me; but it fell
again. I don't know
what arrested the blow.
He sat down, with lips
tightly compressed. At
last he spoke. "I came
here," said he, "to make
you a friendly
proposition; but your
ingratitude chafes me

beyond endurance. You turn aside all my good intentions towards you. I don't know what it is that keeps me from killing you." Again he rose, as if he had a mind to strike me.

But he resumed. "On one condition I will forgive your insolence and crime. You must henceforth have no communication of any kind with the father of your child. You must not ask any thing from him, or receive any thing from him. I will take care of you and your child. You had better promise this at once, and not wait till you are deserted by him. This is the last act of mercy I shall show towards you."

I said something about being unwilling to have my child supported by a man who had cursed it and me also. He rejoined, that a woman who had sunk to my level had no right to expect any thing else. He asked, for the last time, would I accept his kindness? I answered that I would not.

"Very well," said he; "then take the consequences of your

wayward course. Never look to me for help.

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You are my slave, and shall always be my slave. I will never sell you, that you may depend upon."

Hope died away in my heart as he closed the door after him. I had calculated that in his rage he would sell me to a slave-trader; and I knew the father of my child was on the watch to buy me.

About this time my uncle Phillip was expected to return from a voyage. The day before his departure I had officiated as bridesmaid to a young friend. My heart was then ill at ease, but my smiling countenance did not betray it. Only a year had passed; but what fearful changes it had wrought! My heart had grown gray in misery. Lives that flash in sunshine, and lives that are born in tears, receive their hue from circumstances. None of us know what a year may bring forth.

I felt no joy when they
told me my uncle had
come. He wanted to see
me, though he knew
what had happened. I
shrank from him at
first; but at last
consented that he
should come to my
room. He received me
as he always had done.
O, how my heart smote
me when I felt his tears
on my burning cheeks!
The words of my
grandmother came to
my mind,--"Perhaps
your mother and father
are taken from the evil
days to come." My
disappointed heart
could now praise God
that it was so. But why,
thought I, did my
relatives ever cherish
hopes for me? What
was there to save me
from the usual fate of
slave girls? Many more
beautiful and more
intelligent than I had
experienced a similar
fate, or a far worse one.
How could they hope
that I should escape?

My uncle's stay was
short, and I was not
sorry for

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it. I was too ill in mind
and body to enjoy my

friends as I had done.
For some weeks I was
unable to leave my bed.
I could not have any
doctor but my master,
and I would not have
him sent for. At last,
alarmed by my
increasing illness, they
sent for him. I was very
weak and nervous; and
as soon as he entered
the room, I began to
scream. They told him
my state was very
critical. He had no wish
to hasten me out of the
world, and he
withdrew.

When my babe was
born, they said it was
premature. It weighed
only four pounds; but
God let it live. I heard
the doctor say I could
not survive till
morning. I had often
prayed for death; but
now I did not want to
die, unless my child
could die too. Many
weeks passed before I
was able to leave my
bed. I was a mere
wreck of my former
self. For a year there
was scarcely a day
when I was free from
chills and fever. My
babe also was sickly.
His little limbs were
often racked with pain.
Dr. Flint continued his
visits, to look after my
health; and he did not

fail to remind me that my child was an addition to his stock of slaves.

I felt too feeble to dispute with him, and listened to his remarks in silence. His visits were less frequent; but his busy spirit could not remain quiet. He employed my brother in his office, and he was made the medium of frequent notes and messages to me.

William was a bright lad, and of much use to the doctor. He had learned to put up medicines, to leech, cup, and bleed. He had taught himself to read and spell. I was proud of my brother; and the old doctor suspected as much. One day, when I had not seen him for several weeks, I heard his steps approaching the

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door. I dreaded the encounter, and hid myself. He inquired for me, of course; but I was nowhere to be found. He went to his office, and despatched William with a note. The color mounted to

my brother's face when he gave it to me; and he said, "Don't you hate me, Linda, for bringing you these things?" I told him I could not blame him; he was a slave, and obliged to obey his master's will. The note ordered me to come to his office. I went. He demanded to know where I was when he called. I told him I was at home. He flew into a passion, and said he knew better. Then he launched out upon his usual themes,--my crimes against him, and my ingratitude for his forbearance. The laws were laid down to me anew, and I was dismissed. I felt humiliated that my brother should stand by, and listen to such language as would be addressed only to a slave. Poor boy! He was powerless to defend me; but I saw the tears, which he vainly strove to keep back. This manifestation of feeling irritated the doctor. William could do nothing to please him. One morning he did not arrive at the office so early as usual; and that circumstance afforded his master an

opportunity to vent his spleen. He was put in jail. The next day my brother sent a trader to the doctor, with a request to be sold. His master was greatly incensed at what he called his insolence. He said he had put him there to reflect upon his bad conduct, and he certainly was not giving any evidence of repentance. For two days he harassed himself to find somebody to do his office work; but every thing went wrong without William. He was released, and ordered to take his old stand, with many

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threats, if he was not careful about his future behavior.

As the months passed on, my boy improved in health. When he was a year old, they called him beautiful. The little vine was taking deep root in my existence, though its clinging fondness excited a mixture of love and pain. When I was most sorely oppressed I found a solace in his smiles. I loved to watch

his infant slumbers; but
always there was a
dark cloud over my
enjoyment. I could
never forget that he
was a slave. Sometimes
I wished that he might
die in infancy. God tried
me. My darling became
very ill. The bright eyes
grew dull, and the little
feet and hands were so
icy cold that I thought
death had already
touched them. I had
prayed for his death,
but never so earnestly
as I now prayed for his
life; and my prayer was
heard. Alas, what
mockery it is for a slave
mother to try to pray
back her dying child to
life! Death is better
than slavery. It was a
sad thought that I had
no name to give my
child. His father
caressed him and
treated him kindly,
whenever he had a
chance to see him. He
was not unwilling that
he should bear his
name; but he had no
legal claim to it; and if I
had bestowed it upon
him, my master would
have regarded it as a
new crime, a new piece
of insolence, and
would, perhaps,
revenge it on the boy. O,
the serpent of Slavery

has many and
poisonous fangs!

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XII.
FEAR OF
INSURRECTION.

Not far from this time
Nat Turner's
insurrection broke out;
and the news threw
our town into great
commotion. Strange
that they should be
alarmed, when their
slaves were so
"contented and happy"!
But so it was.

It was always the
custom to have a
muster every year. On
that occasion every
white man shouldered
his musket. The
citizens and the
so-called country
gentlemen wore
military uniforms. The
poor whites took their
places in the ranks in
every-day dress, some
without shoes, some
without hats. This
grand occasion had
already passed; and
when the slaves were
told there was to be
another muster, they
were surprised and

rejoiced. Poor creatures! They thought it was going to be a holiday. I was informed of the true state of affairs, and imparted it to the few I could trust. Most gladly would I have proclaimed it to every slave; but I dared not. All could not be relied on. Mighty is the power of the torturing lash.

By sunrise, people were pouring in from every quarter within twenty miles of the town. I knew the houses were to be searched; and I expected it would be done by country bullies and the poor whites. I knew nothing annoyed them so much as to see colored people living in comfort and respectability; so I made arrangements for them with especial care. I arranged

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every thing in my grandmother's house as neatly as possible. I put white quilts on the beds, and decorated some of the rooms with flowers. When all was arranged, I sat down at the window to watch. Far as my eye could

reach, it rested on a motley crowd of soldiers. Drums and fifes were discoursing martial music. The men were divided into companies of sixteen, each headed by a captain. Orders were given, and the wild scouts rushed in every direction, wherever a colored face was to be found.

It was a grand opportunity for the low whites, who had no negroes of their own to scourge. They exulted in such a chance to exercise a little brief authority, and show their subserviency to the slaveholders; not reflecting that the power which trampled on the colored people also kept themselves in poverty, ignorance, and moral degradation.

Those who never witnessed such scenes can hardly believe what I know was inflicted at this time on innocent men, women, and children, against whom there was not the slightest ground for suspicion. Colored people and slaves who lived in remote parts of the town suffered in an especial manner. In some cases the

searchers scattered
powder and shot
among their clothes,
and then sent other
parties to find them,
and bring them
forward as proof that
they were plotting
insurrection. Every
where men, women,
and children were
whipped till the blood
stood in puddles at
their feet. Some
received five hundred
lashes; others were
tied hands and feet,
and tortured with a
bucking paddle, which
blisters the skin
terribly. The dwellings
of the colored people,
unless they happened
to be protected by
some influential white
person, who

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was night at hand, were
robbed of clothing and
every thing else the
marauders thought
worth carrying away.
All day long these
unfeeling wretches
went round, like a
troop of demons,
terrifying and
tormenting the
helpless. At night, they
formed themselves into
patrol bands, and went
wherever they chose

among the colored people, acting out their brutal will. Many women hid themselves in woods and swamps, to keep out of their way. If any of the husbands or fathers told of these outrages, they were tied up to the public whipping post, and cruelly scourged for telling lies about white men. The consternation was universal. No two people that had the slightest tinge of color in their faces dared to be seen talking together.

I entertained no positive fears about our household, because we were in the midst of white families who would protect us. We were ready to receive the soldiers whenever they came. It was not long before we heard the tramp of feet and the sound of voices. The door was rudely pushed open; and in they tumbled, like a pack of hungry wolves. They snatched at every thing within their reach. Every box, trunk, closet, and corner underwent a thorough examination. A box in one of the drawers containing some silver

change was eagerly pounced upon. When I stepped forward to take it from them, one of the soldiers turned and said angrily, "What d'ye foller us fur? D'ye s'pose white folks is come to steal?"

I replied, "You have come to search; but you have searched that box, and I will take it, if you please."

At that moment I saw a white gentleman who was friendly to us; and I called to him, and asked him to

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have the goodness to come in and stay till the search was over. He readily complied. His entrance into the house brought in the captain of the company, whose business it was to guard the outside of the house, and see that none of the inmates left it. This officer was Mr. Litch, the wealthy slaveholder whom I mentioned, in the account of neighboring planters, as being notorious for his cruelty. He felt above soiling his hands with

the search. He merely gave orders; and, if a bit of writing was discovered, it was carried to him by his ignorant followers, who were unable to read.

My grandmother had a large trunk of bedding and table cloths. When that was opened, there was a great shout of surprise; and one exclaimed, "Where'd the damned niggers git all dis sheet an' table clarf?"

My grandmother, emboldened by the presence of our white protector, said, "You may be sure we didn't pilfer 'em from your houses."

"Look here, mammy," said a grim-looking fellow without any coat, "you seem to feel mighty gran' 'cause you got all them 'ere fixens. White folks oughter have 'em all."

His remarks were interrupted by a chorus of voices shouting, "We's got 'em! We's got 'em! Dis 'ere yaller gal's got letters!"

There was a general rush for the supposed letter, which, upon examination, proved to

be some verses written
to me by a friend. In
packing away my
things, I had
overlooked them.
When their captain
informed them of their
contents, they seemed
much disappointed. He
inquired of me who
wrote them.

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I told him it was one of
my friends. "Can you
read them?" he asked.
When I told him I
could, he swore, and
raved, and tore the
paper into bits. "Bring
me all your letters!"
said he, in a
commanding tone. I
told him I had none.
"Don't be afraid," he
continued, in an
insinuating way. "Bring
them all to me. Nobody
shall do you any harm."
Seeing I did not move
to obey him, his
pleasant tone changed
to oaths and threats.
"Who writes to you?
half free niggers?"
inquired he. I replied,
"O, no; most of my
letters are from white
people. Some request
me to burn them after
they are read, and
some I destroy without
reading."

An exclamation of surprise from some of the company put a stop to our conversation. Some silver spoons which ornamented an old-fashioned buffet had just been discovered. My grandmother was in the habit of preserving fruit for many ladies in the town, and of preparing suppers for parties; consequently she had many jars of preserves. The closet that contained these was next invaded, and the contents tasted. One of them, who was helping himself freely, tapped his neighbor on the shoulder, and said, "Wal done! Don't wonder de niggers want to kill all de white folks, when dey live on 'sarves" [meaning preserves]. I stretched out my hand to take the jar, saying, "You were not sent here to search for sweetmeats."

"And what were we sent for?" said the captain, bristling up to me. I evaded the question.

The search of the house was completed, and nothing found to condemn us. They next proceeded to the

garden, and knocked
about every bush and
vine,

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with no better success.
The captain called his
men together, and, after
a short consultation,
the order to march was
given. As they passed
out of the gate, the
captain turned back,
and pronounced a
malediction on the
house. He said it ought
to be burned to the
ground, and each of its
inmates receive
thirtynine lashes. We
came out of this affair
very fortunately; not
losing any thing except
some wearing apparel.
Towards evening the
turbulence increased.
The soldiers,
stimulated by drink,
committed still greater
cruelties. Shrieks and
shouts continually rent
the air. Not daring to go
to the door, I peeped
under the window
curtain. I saw a mob
dragging along a
number of colored
people, each white
man, with his musket
upraised, threatening
instant death if they
did not stop their
shrieks. Among the

prisoners was a respectable old colored minister. They had found a few parcels of shot in his house, which his wife had for years used to balance her scales. For this they were going to shoot him on Court House Green. What a spectacle was that for a civilized country! A rabble, staggering under intoxication, assuming to be the administrators of justice!

The better class of the community exerted their influence to save the innocent, persecuted people; and in several instances they succeeded, by keeping them shut up in jail till the excitement abated. At last the white citizens found that their own property was not safe from the lawless rabble they had summoned to protect them. They rallied the drunken swarm, drove them back into the country, and set a guard over the town.

The next day, the town patrols were commissioned to search colored people that lived out of the city; and the most shocking outrages were committed with perfect impunity. Every day for a fortnight, if I looked out, I saw horsemen with some poor panting negro tied to their saddles, and compelled by the lash to keep up with their speed, till they arrived at the jail yard. Those who had been whipped too unmercifully to walk were washed with brine, tossed into a cart, and carried to jail. One black man, who had not fortitude to endure scourging, promised to give information about the conspiracy. But it turned out that he knew nothing at all. He had not even heard the name of Nat Turner. The poor fellow had, however, made up a story, which augmented his own sufferings and those of the colored people.

The day patrol continued for some weeks, and at sundown a night guard was substituted. Nothing at

all was proved against the colored people, bond or free. The wrath of the slaveholders was somewhat appeased by the capture of Nat Turner. The imprisoned were released. The slaves were sent to their masters, and the free were permitted to return to their ravaged homes. Visiting was strictly forbidden on the plantations. The slaves begged the privilege of again meeting at their little church in the woods, with their burying ground around it. It was built by the colored people, and they had no higher happiness than to meet there and sing hymns together, and pour out their hearts in spontaneous prayer. Their request was denied, and the church was demolished. They were permitted to attend the white churches, a certain portion

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of the galleries being appropriated to their use. There, when every body else had partaken of the communion, and

the benediction had been pronounced, the minister said, "Come down, now, my colored friends." They obeyed the summons, and partook of the bread and wine, in commemoration of the meek and lowly Jesus, who said, "God is your Father, and all ye are brethren."

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XIII. THE CHURCH AND SLAVERY.

After the alarm caused by Nat Turner's insurrection had subsided, the slaveholders came to the conclusion that it would be well to give the slaves enough of religious instruction to keep them from murdering their masters. The Episcopal clergyman offered to hold a separate service on Sundays for their benefit. His colored members were very few, and also very respectable--a fact which I presume had some weight with him. The difficulty was to

decide on a suitable place for them to worship. The Methodist and Baptist churches admitted them in the afternoon; but their carpets and cushions were not so costly as those at the Episcopal church. It was at last decided that they should meet at the house of a free colored man, who was a member.

I was invited to attend, because I could read. Sunday evening came, and, trusting to the cover of night, I ventured out. I rarely ventured out by daylight, for I always went with fear, expecting at every turn to encounter Dr. Flint, who was sure to turn me back, or order me to his office to inquire where I got my bonnet, or some other article of dress. When the Rev. Mr. Pike came, there were some twenty persons present. The reverend gentleman knelt in prayer, then seated himself, and requested all present, who could read, to open their books, while he gave out the portions he wished

them to repeat or
respond to

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His text was, "Servants,
be obedient to them
that are your masters
according to the flesh,
with fear and
trembling, in singleness
of your heart, as unto
Christ."

Pious Mr. Pike brushed
up his hair till it stood
upright, and, in deep,
solemn tones, began:
"Hearken, ye servants!
Give strict heed unto
my words. You are
rebellious sinners. Your
hearts are filled with all
manner of evil. 'Tis the
devil who tempts you.
God is angry with you,
and will surely punish
you, if you don't
forsake your wicked
ways. You that live in
town are eye-servants
behind your master's
back. Instead of serving
your masters faithfully,
which is pleasing in the
sight of your heavenly
Master, you are idle,
and shirk your work.
God sees you. You tell
lies. God hears you.
Instead of being
engaged in
worshipping him, you
are hidden away
somewhere, feasting on
your master's

substance; tossing
coffee-grounds with
some wicked
fortuneteller, or cutting
cards with another old
hag. Your masters may
not find you out, but
God sees you, and will
punish you. O, the
depravity of your
hearts! When your
master's work is done,
are you quietly
together, thinking of
the goodness of God to
such sinful creatures?
No; you are quarrelling,
and tying up little bags
of roots to bury under
the door-steps to
poison each other with.
God sees you. You men
steal away to every
grog shop to sell your
master's corn, that you
may buy rum to drink.
God sees you. You
sneak into the back
streets, or among the
bushes, to pitch
coppers. Although your
masters may not find
you out, God sees you;
and he will punish you.
You must forsake

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your sinful ways, and
be faithful servants.
Obey your old master
and your young
master--your old
mistress and your

young mistress. If you disobey your earthly master, you offend your heavenly Master. You must obey God's commandments. When you go from here, don't stop at the corners of the streets to talk, but go directly home, and let your master and mistress see that you have come."

The benediction was pronounced. We went home, highly amused at brother Pike's gospel teaching, and we determined to hear him again. I went the next Sabbath evening, and heard pretty much a repetition of the last discourse. At the close of the meeting, Mr. Pike informed us that he found it very inconvenient to meet at the friend's house, and he should be glad to see us, every Sunday evening, at his own kitchen.

I went home with the feeling that I had heard the Reverend Mr. Pike for the last time. Some of his members repaired to his house, and found that the kitchen sported two tallow candles; the first time, I am sure, since its present occupant

owned it, for the servants never had any thing but pine knots. It was so long before the reverend gentleman descended from his comfortable parlor that the slaves left, and went to enjoy a Methodist shout. They never seem so happy as when shouting and singing at religious meetings. Many of them are sincere, and nearer to the gate of heaven than sanctimonious Mr. Pike, and other long faced Christians, who see wounded Samaritans, and pass by on the other side.

The slaves generally compose their own songs and

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hymns; and they do not trouble their heads much about the measure. They often sing the following verses:

"Old Satan is one busy ole man;
He rolls dem blocks all in my way;
But Jesus is my bosom friend;
He rolls dem blocks away.

"If I had died when I was
young,
Den how my stam'ring
tongue would have sung;
But I am ole, and now I stand
A narrow chance for to tread
dat heavenly land."

I well remember one
occasion when I
attended a Methodist
class meeting. I went
with a burdened spirit,
and happened to sit
next a poor, bereaved
mother, whose heart
was still heavier than
mine. The class leader
was the town
constable--a man who
bought and sold slaves,
who whipped his
brethren and sisters of
the church at the public
whipping post, in jail or
out of jail. He was
ready to perform that
Christian office any
where for fifty cents.
This white-faced,
black-hearted brother
came near us, and said
to the stricken woman,
"Sister, can't you tell us
how the Lord deals
with your soul? Do you
love him as you did
formerly?"

She rose to her feet,
and said, in piteous
tones, "My Lord and
Master, help me! My
load is more than I can

bear. God has hid
himself from me, and I
am left in darkness and
misery." Then, striking
her breast, she
continued, "I can't tell
you what is in here!
They've got all my
children. Last week
they took the last one.
God only knows where
they've sold her. They
let me have her sixteen
years, and then--O! O!
Pray for her brothers
and sisters!

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I've got nothing to live
for now. God make my
time short!"
She sat down,
quivering in every limb.
I saw that constable
class leader become
crimson in the face
with suppressed
laughter, while he held
up his handkerchief,
that those who were
weeping for the poor
woman's calamity
might not see his
merriment. Then, with
assumed gravity, he
said to the bereaved
mother, "Sister, pray to
the Lord that every
dispensation of his
divine will may be
sanctified to the good

of your poor needy
soul!"

The congregation
struck up a hymn, and
sung as though they
were as free as the
birds that warbled
round us,--

"Ole Satan thought he had a
mighty aim;
He missed my soul, and
caught my sins.
Cry Amen, cry Amen, cry
Amen to God!

"He took my sins upon his
back;
Went muttering and
grumbling down to hell.
Cry Amen, cry Amen, cry
Amen to God!

"Ole Satan's church is here
below.
Up to God's free church I
hope to go.
Cry Amen, cry Amen, cry
Amen to God!"

Precious are such
moments to the poor
slaves. If you were to
hear them at such
times, you might think
they were happy. But
can that hour of singing
and shouting sustain
them through the
dreary week, toiling
without wages, under
constant dread of the
lash?

The Episcopal
clergyman, who, ever
since my earliest
recollection, had been a
sort of god among the
slaveholders,
concluded, as his family
was large, that he must
go where money was
more abundant. A

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very different
clergyman took his
place. The change was
very agreeable to the
colored people, who
said, "God has sent us a
good man this time."
They loved him, and
their children followed
him for a smile or a
kind word. Even the
slaveholders felt his
influence. He brought
to the rectory five
slaves. His wife taught
them to read and write,
and to be useful to her
and themselves. As
soon as he was settled,
he turned his attention
to the needy slaves
around him. He urged
upon his parishioners
the duty of having a
meeting expressly for
them every Sunday,
with a sermon adapted
to their
comprehension. After
much argument and
importunity, it was

finally agreed that they might occupy the gallery of the church on Sunday evenings. Many colored people, hitherto unaccustomed to attend church, now gladly went to hear the gospel preached. The sermons were simple, and they understood them. Moreover, it was the first time they had ever been addressed as human beings. It was not long before his white parishioners began to be dissatisfied. He was accused of preaching better sermons to the negroes than he did to them. He honestly confessed that he bestowed more pains upon those sermons than upon any others; for the slaves were reared in such ignorance that it was a difficult task to adapt himself to their comprehension. Dissensions arose in the parish. Some wanted he should preach to them in the evening, and to the slaves in the afternoon. In the midst of these disputings his wife died, after a very short illness. Her slaves gathered round her dying bed in great

sorrow. She said, "I have tried to do you good and promote your happiness; and if I have

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failed, it has not been for want of interest in your welfare. Do not weep for me; but prepare for the new duties that lie before you. I leave you all free. May we meet in a better world." Her liberated slaves were sent away, with funds to establish them comfortably. The colored people will long bless the memory of that truly Christian woman. Soon after her death her husband preached his farewell sermon, and many tears were shed at his departure.

Several years after, he passed through our town and preached to his former congregation. In his afternoon sermon he addressed the colored people. "My friends," said he, "it affords me great happiness to have an opportunity of speaking to you again. For two years I have been striving to do something for the

colored people of my own parish; but nothing is yet accomplished. I have not even preached a sermon to them. Try to live according to the word of God, my friends. Your skin is darker than mine; but God judges men by their hearts, not by the color of their skins." This was strange doctrine from a southern pulpit. It was very offensive to slaveholders. They said he and his wife had made fools of their slaves, and that he preached like a fool to the negroes.

I knew an old black man, whose piety and child-like trust in God were beautiful to witness. At fifty-three years old he joined the Baptist church. He had a most earnest desire to learn to read. He thought he should know how to serve God better if he could only read the Bible. He came to me, and begged me to teach him. He said he could not pay me, for he had

no money; but he would bring me nice fruit when the season for it came. I asked him if he didn't know it was contrary to law; and that slaves were whipped and imprisoned for teaching each other to read. This brought the tears into his eyes. "Don't be troubled, uncle Fred," said I. "I have no thoughts of refusing to teach you. I only told you of the law, that you might know the danger, and be on your guard." He thought he could plan to come three times a week without its being suspected. I selected a quiet nook, where no intruder was likely to penetrate, and there I taught him his A, B, C. Considering his age, his progress was astonishing. As soon as he could spell in two syllables he wanted to spell out words in the Bible. The happy smile that illuminated his face put joy into my heart. After spelling out a few words, he paused, and said, "Honey, it 'pears when I can read dis good book I shall be nearer to God. White man is got all de sense. He can learn easy. It

ain't easy for ole black man like me. I only wants to read dis book, dat I may know how to live; den I hab no fear 'bout dying."

I tried to encourage him by speaking of the rapid progress he had made. "Hab patience, child," he replied. "I learns slow."

I had no need of patience. His gratitude, and the happiness I imparted, were more than a recompense for all my trouble.

At the end of six months he had read through the New Testament, and could find any text in it. One day, when he had recited unusually well, I said,

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"Uncle Fred, how do you manage to get your lessons so well?"

"Lord bress you, chile," he replied. "You nebber gibbs me a lesson dat I don't pray to God to help me to understand what I spells and what I reads. And he does help me, chile. Bress his holy name!"

There are thousands,
who, like good uncle
Fred, are thirsting for
the water of life; but
the law forbids it, and
the churches withhold
it. They send the Bible
to heathen abroad, and
neglect the heathen at
home. I am glad that
missionaries go out to
the dark corners of the
earth; but I ask them
not to overlook the
dark corners at home.
Talk to American
slaveholders as you
talk to savages in
Africa. Tell them it is
wrong to traffic in men.
Tell them it is sinful to
sell their own children,
and atrocious to violate
their own daughters.
Tell them that all men
are brethren, and that
man has no right to
shut out the light of
knowledge from his
brother. Tell them they
are answerable to God
for sealing up the
Fountain of Life from
souls that are thirsting
for it.

There are men who
would gladly undertake
such missionary work
as this; but, alas! their
number is small. They
are hated by the south,
and would be driven
from its soil, or
dragged to prison to

die, as others have
been before them. The
field is ripe for the
harvest, and awaits the
reapers. Perhaps the
great grandchildren of
uncle Fred may have
freely imparted to them
the divine treasures,
which he sought by
stealth, at the risk of
the prison and the
scourge.

Are doctors of divinity
blind, or are they
hypocrites?

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I suppose some are the
one, and some the
other; but I think if
they felt the interest in
the poor and the lowly,
that they ought to feel,
they would not be so
easily blinded. A
clergyman who goes to
the south, for the first
time, has usually some
feeling, however vague,
that slavery is wrong.
The slaveholder
suspects this, and plays
his game accordingly.
He makes himself as
agreeable as possible;
talks on theology, and
other kindred topics.
The reverend
gentleman is asked to
invoke a blessing on a
table loaded with

luxuries. After dinner he walks round the premises, and sees the beautiful groves and flowering vines, and the comfortable huts of favored household slaves. The southerner invites him to talk with these slaves. He asks them if they want to be free, and they say, "O, no, massa." This is sufficient to satisfy him. He comes home to publish a "South-Side View of Slavery," and to complain of the exaggerations of abolitionists. He assures people that he has been to the south, and seen slavery for himself; that it is a beautiful "patriarchal institution;" that the slaves don't want their freedom; that they have hallelujah meetings, and other religious privileges.

What does he know of the half-starved wretches toiling from dawn till dark on the plantations? of mothers shrieking for their children, torn from their arms by slave traders? of young girls dragged down into moral filth? of pools of blood around the whipping post? of hounds trained to tear

human flesh? of men
screwed into cotton
gins to die? The
slaveholder showed
him none of these
things, and the slaves
dared not tell of them if
he had asked them.

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There is a great
difference between
Christianity and
religion at the south. If
a man goes to the
communion table, and
pays money into the
treasury of the church,
no matter if it be the
price of blood, he is
called religious. If a
pastor has offspring by
a woman not his wife,
the church dismiss him,
if she is a white
woman; but if she is
colored, it does not
hinder his continuing
to be their good
shepherd.

When I was told that
Dr. Flint had joined the
Episcopal church, I was
much surprised. I
supposed that religion
had a purifying effect
on the character of
men; but the worst
persecutions I endured
from him were after he
was a communicant.
The conversation of the

doctor, the day after he had been confirmed, certainly gave me no indication that he had "renounced the devil and all his works." In answer to some of his usual talk, I reminded him that he had just joined the church. "Yes, Linda," said he. "It was proper for me to do so. I am getting in years, and my position in society requires it, and it puts an end to all the damned slang. You would do well to join the church, too, Linda."

"There are sinners enough in it already," rejoined I. "If I could be allowed to live like a Christian, I should be glad."

"You can do what I require; and if you are faithful to me, you will be as virtuous as my wife," he replied.

I answered that the Bible didn't say so.

His voice became hoarse with rage. "How dare you preach to me about your infernal Bible!" he

exclaimed. "What right
have you, who are my
negro, to talk to me
about what you would
like, and what you
wouldn't like? I am
your master, and you
shall obey me."

No wonder the slaves
sing,--

"Ole Satan's church is
here below;
Up to God's free church
I hope to go."

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XIV. ANOTHER LINK TO LIFE.

I HAD not returned to
my master's house
since the birth of my
child. The old man
raved to have me thus,
removed from his
immediate power; but
his wife vowed, by all
that was good and
great, she would kill me
if I came back; and he
did not doubt her
word. Sometimes he
would stay away for a
season. Then he would
come and renew the
old threadbare
discourse about his
forbearance and my
ingratitude. He labored,

most unnecessarily, to convince me that I had lowered myself. The venomous old reprobate had no need of descanting on that theme. I felt humiliated enough. My unconscious babe was the ever-present witness of my shame. I listened with silent contempt when he talked about my having forfeited his good opinion; but I shed bitter tears that I was no longer worthy of being respected by the good and pure. Alas! slavery still held me in its poisonous grasp. There was no chance for me to be respectable. There was no prospect of being able to lead a better life.

Sometimes, when my master found that I still refused to accept what he called his kind offers, he would threaten to sell my child. "Perhaps that will humble you," said he.

Humble me! Was I not already in the dust? But his threat lacerated my heart. I knew the law gave him power to fulfil

it; for slaveholders
have been

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cunning enough to enact that "the child shall follow the condition of the mother, " not of the father; thus taking care that licentiousness shall not interfere with avarice. This reflection made me clasp my innocent babe all the more firmly to my heart. Horrid visions passed through my mind when I thought of his liability to fall into the slave trader's hands. I wept over him, and said, "O my child! perhaps they will leave you in some cold cabin to die, and then throw you into a hole, as if you were a dog."

When Dr. Flint learned that I was again to be a mother, he was exasperated beyond measure. He rushed from the house, and returned with a pair of shears. I had a fine head of hair; and he often railed about my pride of arranging it nicely. He cut every hair close to my head, storming and swearing all the time. I replied to some of his abuse, and he struck me. Some

months before, he had pitched me down stairs in a fit of passion; and the injury I received was so serious that I was unable to turn myself in bed for many days. He then said, "Linda, I swear by God I will never raise my hand against you again;" but I knew that he would forget his promise.

After he discovered my situation, he was like a restless spirit from the pit. He came every day; and I was subjected to such insults as no pen can describe. I would not describe them if I could; they were too low, too revolting. I tried to keep them from my grandmother's knowledge as much as I could. I knew she had enough to sadden her life, without having my troubles to bear. When she saw the doctor treat me with violence, and heard him utter

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oaths terrible enough to palsy a man's tongue, she could not always hold her peace. It was natural and

motherlike that she should try to defend me; but it only made matters worse.

When they told me my new-born babe was a girl, my heart was heavier than it had ever been before. Slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women. Superadded to the burden common to all, they have wrongs, and sufferings, and mortifications peculiarly their own.

Dr. Flint had sworn that he would make me suffer, to my last day, for this new crime against him, as he called it; and as long as he had me in his power he kept his word. On the fourth day after the birth of my babe, he entered my room suddenly, and commanded me to rise and bring my baby to him. The nurse who took care of me had gone out of the room to prepare some nourishment, and I was alone. There was no alternative. I rose, took up my babe, and crossed the room to where he sat. "Now stand there," said he, "till I tell you to go back!" My child bore a

strong resemblance to
her father, and to the
deceased Mrs. Sands,
her grandmother. He
noticed this; and while
I stood before him,
trembling with
weakness, he heaped
upon me and my little
one every vile epithet
he could think of. Even
the grandmother in her
grave did not escape
his curses. In the midst
of his vituperations I
fainted at his feet. This
recalled him to his
senses. He took the
baby from my arms,
laid it on the bed,
dashed cold water in
my face, took me up,
and shook me violently,
to restore my
consciousness before
any one entered the
room. Just then my
grandmother

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came in, and he hurried
out of the house. I
suffered in
consequence of this
treatment; but I begged
my friends to let me
die, rather than send
for the doctor. There
was nothing I dreaded
so much as his
presence. My life was
spared; and I was glad
for the sake of my little

ones. Had it not been for these ties to life, I should have been glad to be released by death, though I had lived only nineteen years.

Always it gave me a pang that my children had no lawful claim to a name. Their father offered his; but, if I had wished to accept the offer, I dared not while my master lived.

Moreover, I knew it would not be accepted at their baptism. A Christian name they were at least entitled to; and we resolved to call my boy for our dear good Benjamin, who had gone far away from us.

My grandmother belonged to the church; and she was very desirous of having the children christened. I knew Dr. Flint would forbid it, and I did not venture to attempt it. But chance favored me. He was called to visit a patient out of town, and was obliged to be absent during Sunday. "Now is the time," said my grandmother; "we will take the children to church, and have them christened."

When I entered the church, recollections of my mother came over me, and I felt subdued in spirit. There she had presented me for baptism, without any reason to feel ashamed. She had been married, and had such legal rights as slavery allows to a slave. The vows had at least been sacred to her, and she had never violated them. I was glad she was not alive, to know under what different circumstances her grandchildren

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were presented for baptism. Why had my lot been so different from my mother's? Her master had died when she was a child; and she remained with her mistress till she married. She was never in the power of any master; and thus she escaped one class of the evils that generally fall upon slaves.

When my baby was about to be christened, the former mistress of my father stepped up to me, and proposed to give it her Christian name. To this I added

the surname of my
father, who had himself
no legal right to it; for
my grandfather on the
paternal side was a
white gentleman. What
tangled skeins are the
genealogies of slavery!
I loved my father; but it
mortified me to be
obliged to bestow his
name on my children.

When we left the
church, my father's old
mistress invited me to
go home with her. She
clasped a gold chain
round my baby's neck. I
thanked her for this
kindness; but I did not
like the emblem. I
wanted no chain to be
fastened on my
daughter, not even if its
links were of gold. How
earnestly I prayed that
she might never feel
the weight of slavery's
chain, whose iron
entereth into the soul!

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XV.
CONTINUED
PERSECUTIONS.

My children grew
finely; and Dr. Flint
would often say to me,
with an exulting smile,

"These brats will bring me a handsome sum of money one of these days."

I thought to myself that, God being my helper, they should never pass into his hands. It seemed to me I would rather see them killed than have them given up to his power. The money for the freedom of myself and my children could be obtained; but I derived no advantage from that circumstance. Dr. Flint loved money, but he loved power more. After much discussion, my friends resolved on making another trial. There was a slaveholder about to leave for Texas, and he was commissioned to buy me. He was to begin with nine hundred dollars, and go up to twelve. My master refused his offers. "Sir," said he, "she don't belong to me. She is my daughter's property, and I have no right to sell her. I mistrust that you come from her paramour. If so, you may tell him that he cannot buy her for any money; neither can he buy her children."

The doctor came to see me the next day, and my heart beat quicker as he entered. I never had seen the old man tread with so majestic a step. He seated himself and looked at me with withering scorn. My children had learned to be afraid of him. The little one

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would shut her eyes and hide her face on my shoulder whenever she saw him; and Benny, who was now nearly five years old, often inquired, "What makes that bad man come here so many times? Does he want to hurt us?" I would clasp the dear boy in my arms, trusting that he would be free before he was old enough to solve the problem. And now, as the doctor sat there so grim and silent, the child left his play and came and nestled up by me. At last my tormentor spoke. "So you are left in disgust, are you?" said he. "It is no more than I expected. You remember I told you years ago that you would be treated so. So he is tired of you? Ha! ha! ha! The virtuous

madam don't like to hear about it, does she? Ha! ha! ha!" There was a sting in his calling me virtuous madam. I no longer had the power of answering him as I had formerly done. He continued: "So it seems you are trying to get up another intrigue. Your new paramour came to me, and offered to buy you; but you may be assured you will not succeed. You are mine; and you shall be mine for life. There lives no human being that can take you out of slavery. I would have done it; but you rejected my kind offer."

I told him I did not wish to get up any intrigue; that I had never seen the man who offered to buy me.

"Do you tell me I lie?" exclaimed he, dragging me from my chair. "Will you say again that you never saw that man?"

I answered, "I do say so."

He clinched my arm with a volley of oaths. Ben began to scream, and I told him to go to his grandmother.

"Don't you stir a step, you little wretch!" said he. The child drew nearer to me, and put his arms round me, as if he wanted to protect me. This was too much for my enraged master. He caught him up and hurled him across the room. I thought he was dead, and rushed towards him to take him up.

"Not yet!" exclaimed the doctor. "Let him lie there till he comes to."

"Let me go! Let me go!" I screamed, "or I will raise the whole house." I struggled and got away; but he clinched me again. Somebody opened the door, and he released me. I picked up my insensible child, and when I turned my tormentor was gone. Anxiously I bent over the little form, so pale and still; and when the brown eyes at last opened, I don't know whether I was very happy.

All the doctor's former persecutions were renewed. He came morning, noon, and night. No jealous lover ever watched a rival

more closely than he watched me and the unknown slaveholder, with whom he accused me of wishing to get up an intrigue. When my grandmother was out of the way he searched every room to find him.

In one of his visits, he happened to find a young girl, whom he had sold to a trader a few days previous. His statement was, that he sold her because she had been too familiar with the overseer. She had had a bitter life with him, and was glad to be sold. She had no mother, and no near ties. She had been torn from all her family years before. A few friends had entered into bonds for her safety, if the trader would allow her to spend with them the time that intervened between

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her sale and the gathering up of his human stock. Such a favor was rarely granted. It saved the trader the expense of board and jail fees, and though the amount was

small, it was a weighty consideration in a slave-trader's mind.

Dr. Flint always had an aversion to meeting slaves after he had sold them. He ordered Rose out of the house; but he was no longer her master, and she took no notice of him. For once the crushed Rose was the conqueror. His gray eyes flashed angrily upon her; but that was the extent of his power. "How came this girl here?" he exclaimed. "What right had you to allow it, when you knew I had sold her?"

I answered "This is my grandmother's house, and Rose came to see her. I have no right to turn any body out of doors, that comes here for honest purposes."

He gave me the blow that would have fallen upon Rose if she had still been his slave. My grandmother's attention had been attracted by loud voices, and she entered in time to see a second blow dealt. She was not a woman to let such an outrage, in her own house, go unrebuked. The doctor undertook to explain that I had

been insolent. Her indignant feelings rose higher and higher, and finally boiled over in words. "Get out of my house!" she exclaimed. "Go home, and take care of your wife and children, and you will have enough to do, without watching my family."

He threw the birth of my children in her face, and accused her of sanctioning the life I was leading. She told him I was living with her by compulsion of his wife; that he needn't accuse her, for he was the one to blame; he was the one who had caused all the

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trouble. She grew more and more excited as she went on. "I tell you what, Dr. Flint," said she, "you ain't got many more years to live, and you'd better be saying your prayers. It will take 'em all, and more too, to wash the dirt off your soul."

"Do you know whom you are talking to?" he exclaimed.

She replied, "Yes, I know very well who I am talking to."

He left the house in a great rage. I looked at my grandmother. Our eyes met. Their angry expression had passed away, but she looked sorrowful and weary--weary of incessant strife. I wondered that it did not lessen her love for me; but if it did she never showed it. She was always kind, always ready to sympathize with my troubles. There might have been peace and contentment in that humble home if it had not been for the demon Slavery.

The winter passed undisturbed by the doctor. The beautiful spring came; and when Nature resumes her lovelines, the human soul is apt to revive also. My drooping hopes came to life again with the flowers. I was dreaming of freedom again; more for my children's sake than my own. I planned and I planned. Obstacles hit against plans. There seemed no

way of overcoming
them; and yet I hoped.

Back came the wily
doctor. I was not at
home when he called. A
friend had invited me
to a small party, and to
gratify her I went. To
my great consternation,
a messenger came in
haste to say that Dr.
Flint was at my
grandmother's, and
insisted on seeing me.
They did not tell him
where I was, or he
would have come

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and raised a
disturbance in my
friend's house. They
sent me a dark
wrapper; I threw it on
and hurried home. My
speed did not save me;
the doctor had gone
away in anger. I
dreaded the morning,
but I could not delay it;
it came, warm and
bright. At an early hour
the doctor came and
asked me where I had
been last night. I told
him. He did not believe
me, and sent to my
friend's house to
ascertain the facts. He
came in the afternoon
to assure me he was
satisfied that I had

spoken the truth. He seemed to be in a facetious mood, and I expected some jeers were coming. "I suppose you need some recreation," said he, "but I am surprised at your being there, among those negroes. It was not the place for you. Are you allowed to visit such people?"

I understood this covert fling at the white gentleman who was my friend; but I merely replied, "I went to visit my friends, and any company they keep is good enough for me."

He went on to say, "I have seen very little of you of late, but my interest in you is unchanged. When I said I would have no more mercy on you I was rash. I recall my words. Linda, you desire freedom for yourself and your children, and you can obtain it only through me. If you agree to what I am about to propose, you and they shall be free. There must be no communication of any kind between you and their father. I will procure a cottage, where you and the

children can live together. Your labor shall be light, such as sewing for my family. Think what is offered you, Linda--a home and freedom! Let the past be forgotten. If I have been harsh with you at times,

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your willfulness drove me to it. You know I exact obedience from my own children, and I consider you as yet a child."

He paused for an answer, but I remained silent.

"Why don't you speak?" said he. "What more do you wait for?"

"Nothing, sir."

"Then you accept my offer?"

"No, sir."

His anger was ready to break loose; but he succeeded in curbing it, and replied, "You have answered without thought. But I must let you know there are two sides to my proposition; if you reject the bright side, you will be obliged to

take the dark one. You must either accept my offer, or you and your children shall be sent to your young master's plantation, there to remain till your young mistress is married; and your children shall fare like the rest of the negro children. I give you a week to consider of it."

He was shrewd; but I knew he was not to be trusted. I told him I was ready to give my answer now.

"I will not receive it now," he replied. "You act too much from impulse. Remember that you and your children can be free a week from to-day if you choose."

On what a monstrous chance hung the destiny of my children! I knew that my master's offer was a snare, and that if I entered it escape would be impossible. As for his promise, I knew him so well that I was sure if he gave me free papers, they would be so managed as to have no legal value. The alternative was inevitable. I resolved to go to the plantation.

But then I thought how
completely I should be
in his

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power, and the
prospect was appalling.
Even if I should kneel
before him, and
implore him to spare
me, for the sake of my
children, I knew he
would spurn me with
his foot, and my
weakness would be his
triumph.

Before the week
expired, I heard that
young Mr. Flint was
about to be married to
a lady of his own
stamp. I foresaw the
position I should
occupy in his
establishment. I had
once been sent to the
plantation for
punishment, and fear
of the son had induced
the father to recall me
very soon. My mind
was made up; I was
resolved that I would
foil my master and save
my children, or I would
perish in the attempt. I
kept my plans to
myself; I knew that
friends would try to
dissuade me from
them, and I would not

wound their feelings by rejecting their advice.

On the decisive day the doctor came, and said he hoped I had made a wise choice.

"I am ready to go to the plantation, sir," I replied.

"Have you thought how important your decision is to your children?" said he.

I told him I had.

"Very well. Go to the plantation, and my curse go with you," he replied. "Your boy shall be put to work, and he shall soon be sold; and your girl shall be raised for the purpose of selling well. Go your own ways!" He left the room with curses, not to be repeated.

As I stood rooted to the spot, my grandmother came and said, "Linda, child, what did you tell him?"

I answered that I was going to the plantation.

"Must you go?" said she. "Can't something be done to stop it?"

I told her it was useless to try; but she begged me not to give up. She said she would go to the doctor, and remind him how long and how faithfully she had served in the family, and how she had taken her own baby from her breast to nourish his wife. She would tell him I had been out of the family so long they would not miss me; that she would pay them for my time, and the money would procure a woman who had more strength for the situation than I had. I begged her not to go; but she persisted in saying, "He will listen to me, Linda." She went, and was treated as I expected. He coolly listened to what she said, but denied her request. He told her that what he did was for my good, that my feelings were entirely above my situation, and that on the plantation I would receive treatment that was suitable to my behavior.

My grandmother was much cast down. I had my secret hopes; but I must fight my battle alone. I had a woman's

pride, and a mother's
love for my children;
and I resolved that out
of the darkness of this
hour a brighter dawn
should rise for them.
My master had power
and law on his side; I
had a determined will.
There is might in each.

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XVI.
SCENES AT THE
PLANTATION.

Early the next morning
I left my grandmother's
with my youngest child.
My boy was ill, and I
left him behind. I had
many sad thoughts as
the old wagon jolted
on. Hitherto, I had
suffered alone; now, my
little one was to be
treated as a slave. As
we drew near the great
house, I thought of the
time when I was
formerly sent there out
of revenge. I wondered
for what purpose I was
now sent. I could not
tell. I resolved to obey
orders so far as duty
required; but within
myself, I determined to
make my stay as short
as possible. Mr. Flint
was waiting to receive

us, and told me to follow him up stairs to receive orders for the day. My little Ellen was left below in the kitchen. It was a change for her, who had always been so carefully tended. My young master said she might amuse herself in the yard. This was kind of him, since the child was hateful to his sight. My task was to fit up the house for the reception of the bride. In the midst of sheets, tablecloths, towels, drapery, and carpeting, my head was as busy planning, as were my fingers with the needle. At noon I was allowed to go to Ellen. She had sobbed herself to sleep. I heard Mr. Flint say to a neighbor, "I've got her down here, and I'll soon take the town notions out of her head. My father is partly to blame for her nonsense. He ought to have broke her in long ago." The remark

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was made within my hearing, and it would have been quite as manly to have made it to my face. He had said things to my face which might, or might not,

have surprised his neighbor if he had known of them. He was "a chip of the old block."

I resolved to give him no cause to accuse me of being too much of a lady, so far as work was concerned. I worked day and night, with wretchedness before me. When I lay down beside my child, I felt how much easier it would be to see her die than to see her master beat her about, as I daily saw him beat other little ones. The spirit of the mothers was so crushed by the lash, that they stood by, without courage to remonstrate. How much more must I suffer, before I should be "broke in" to that degree?

I wished to appear as contented as possible. Sometimes I had an opportunity to send a few lines home; and this brought up recollections that made it difficult, for a time, to seem calm and indifferent to my lot. Notwithstanding my efforts, I saw that Mr. Flint regarded me with a suspicious eye. Ellen broke down under the

trials of her new life.
Separated from me,
with no one to look
after her, she wandered
about, and in a few
days cried herself sick.
One day, she sat under
the window where I
was at work, crying
that weary cry which
makes a mother's heart
bleed. I was obliged to
steel myself to bear it.
After a while it ceased.
I looked out, and she
was gone. As it was
near noon, I ventured
to go down in search of
her. The great house
was raised two feet
above the ground. I
looked under it, and
saw her about midway,
fast asleep. I

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crept under and drew
her out. As I held her in
my arms, I thought how
well it would be for her
if she never waked up;
and I uttered my
thought aloud. I was
startled to hear some
one say, "Did you speak
to me?" I looked up,
and saw Mr. Flint
standing beside me. He
said nothing further,
but turned, frowning
away. That night he
sent Ellen a biscuit and
a cup of sweetened

milk. This generosity surprised me. I learned afterwards, that in the afternoon he had killed a large snake, which crept from under the house; and I supposed that incident had prompted his unusual kindness.

The next morning the old cart was loaded with shingles for town. I put Ellen into it, and sent her to her grandmother. Mr. Flint said I ought to have asked his permission. I told him the child was sick, and required attention which I had no time to give. He let it pass; for he was aware that I had accomplished much work in a little time.

I had been three weeks on the plantation, when I planned a visit home. It must be at night, after every body was in bed. I was six miles from town, and the road was very dreary. I was to go with a young man, who, I knew often stole to town to see his mother. One night, when all was quiet, we started. Fear gave speed to our steps, and we were not long in performing the journey. I arrived at my

grandmother's. Her
bed room was on the
first floor, and the
window was open, the
weather being warm. I
spoke to her and she
awoke. She let me in
and closed the window,
lest some late
passer-by should see
me. A light was
brought, and the whole
household gathered
round me, some
smiling

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and some crying. I
went to look at my
children, and thanked
God for their happy
sleep. The tears fell as I
leaned over them. As I
moved to leave, Benny
stirred. I turned back,
and whispered,
"Mother is here." After
digging at his eyes with
his little first, they
opened, and he sat up
in bed, looking at me
curiously. Having
satisfied himself that it
was I, he exclaimed, "O
mother! you ain't dead,
are you? They didn't
cut off your head at the
plantation, did they?"
My time was up too
soon, and my guide was
waiting for me. I laid
Benny back in his bed,
and dried his tears by a

promise to come again soon. Rapidly we retraced our steps back to the plantation. About half way we were met by a company of four patrols. Luckily we heard their horse's hoofs before they came in sight, and we had time to hide behind a large tree. They passed, hallooing and shouting in a manner that indicated a recent carousal. How thankful we were that they had not their does with them! We hastened our footsteps, and when we arrived on the plantation we heard the sound of the hand-mill. The slaves were grinding their corn. We were safely in the house before the horn summoned them to their labor. I divided my little parcel of food with my guide, knowing that he had lost the chance of grinding his corn, and must toil all day in the field.

Mr. Flint often took an inspection of the house, to see that no one was idle. The entire management of the work was trusted to me, because he knew nothing about it; and

rather than hire a
superintendent he
contented himself with
my arrangements. He
had

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often urged upon his
father the necessity of
having me at the
plantation to take
charge of his affairs,
and make clothes for
the slaves; but the old
man knew him too well
to consent to that
arrangement.

When I had been
working a month at the
plantation, the great
aunt of Mr. Flint came
to make him a visit.
This was the good old
lady who paid fifty
dollars for my
grandmother, for the
purpose of making her
free, when she stood on
the auction block. My
grandmother loved this
old lady, whom we all
called Miss Fanny. She
often came to take tea
with us. On such
occasions the table was
spread with a
snow-white cloth, and
the china cups and
silver spoons were
taken from the
old-fashioned buffet.
There were hot
muffins, tea rusks, and

delicious sweetmeats.
My grandmother kept
two cows, and the fresh
cream was Miss
Fanny's delight. She
invariably declared that
it was the best in town.
The old ladies had
cosey times together.
They would work and
chat, and sometimes,
while talking over old
times, their spectacles
would get dim with
tears, and would have
to be taken off and
wiped. When Miss
Fanny bade us good by,
her bag was filled with
grandmother's best
cakes, and she was
urged to come again
soon.

There had been a time
when Dr. Flint's wife
came to take tea with
us, and when her
children were also sent
to have a feast of "Aunt
Marthy's" nice cooking.
But after I became an
object of her jealousy
and spite, she was
angry with
grandmother for giving
a shelter to me and my
children. She would not
even speak to her in
the street. This
wounded my
grandmother's feelings,
for she could not retain
ill will against the

woman whom she had
nourished with her
milk when a babe. The
doctor's wife would
gladly have prevented
our intercourse with
Miss Fanny if she could
have done it, but
fortunately she was not
dependent on the
bounty of the Flints.
She had enough to be
independent; and that
is more than can ever
be gained from charity,
however lavish it may
be.

Miss Fanny was
endeared to me by
many recollections, and
I was rejoiced to see
her at the plantation.
The warmth of her
large, loyal heart made
the house seem
pleasanter while she
was in it. She staid a
week, and I had many
talks with her. She said
her principal object in
coming was to see how
I was treated, and
whether any thing
could be done for me.
She inquired whether
she could help me in
any way. I told her I
believed not. She
condoled with me in
her own peculiar way;
saying she wished that
I and all my

grandmother's family
were at rest in our
graves, for not until
then should she feel
any peace about us.
The good old soul did
not dream that I was
planning to bestow
peace upon her, with
regard to myself and
my children; not by
death, but by securing
our freedom.

Again and again I had
traversed those dreary
twelve miles, to and
from the town; and all
the way, I was
meditating upon some
means of escape for
myself and my
children. My friends
had made every effort
that ingenuity could
devise to effect our
purchase, but all their
plans had proved
abortive. Dr. Flint was
suspicious, and
determined not to
loosen his grasp upon
us. I could have made
my escape alone; but it
was more for my
helpless children than
for myself that I longed

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for freedom. Though
the boon would have
been precious to me,
above all price, I would

not have taken it at the expense of leaving them in slavery. Every trial I endured, every sacrifice I made for their sakes, drew them closer to my heart, and gave me fresh courage to beat back the dark waves that rolled and rolled over me in a seemingly endless night of storms.

The six weeks were nearly completed, when Mr. Flint's bride was expected to take possession of her new home. The arrangements were all completed, and Mr. Flint said I had done well. He expected to leave home on Saturday, and return with his bride the following Wednesday. After receiving various orders from him, I ventured to ask permission to spend Sunday in town. It was granted; for which favor I was thankful. It was the first I had ever asked of him, and I intended it should be the last. It needed more than one night to accomplish the project I had in view; but the whole of Sunday would give me an opportunity. I spent the Sabbath with my grandmother.

A calmer, more
beautiful day never
came down out of
heaven. To me it was a
day of conflicting
emotions. Perhaps it
was the last day I
should ever spend
under that dear, old
sheltering roof!
Perhaps these were the
last talks I should ever
have with the faithful
old friend of my whole
life! Perhaps it was the
last time I and my
children should be
together! Well, better
so, I thought, than that
they should be slaves. I
knew the doom that
awaited my fair baby in
slavery, and I
determined to save her
from it, or perish in the
attempt. I went to make
this vow at the graves
of my poor

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parents, in the
burying-ground of the
slaves. "There the
wicked cease from
troubling, and there the
weary be at rest. There
the prisoners rest
together; they hear not
the voice of the
oppressor; the servant
is free from his master."
I knelt by the graves of
my parents, and

thanked God, as I had often done before, that they had not lived to witness my trials, or to mourn over my sins. I had received my mother's blessing when she died; and in many an hour of tribulation I had seemed to hear her voice, sometimes chiding me, sometimes whispering loving words into my wounded heart. I have shed many and bitter tears, to think that when I am gone from my children they cannot remember me with such entire satisfaction as I remembered my mother.

The graveyard was in the woods, and twilight was coming on. Nothing broke the death-like stillness except the occasional twitter of a bird. My spirit was overawed by the solemnity of the scene. For more than ten years I had frequented this spot, but never had it seemed to me so sacred as now. A black stump, at the head of my mother's grave, was all that remained of a tree my father had planted. His grave was marked by a small wooden

board, bearing his name, the letters of which were nearly obliterated. I knelt down and kissed them, and poured forth a prayer to God for guidance and support in the perilous step I was about to take. As I passed the wreck of the old meeting house, where, before Nat Turner's time, the slaves had been allowed to meet for worship, I seemed to hear my father's voice come from it, bidding me not to tarry till I reached freedom or the

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grave. I rushed on with renovated hopes. My trust in God had been strengthened by that prayer among the graves.

My plan was to conceal myself at the house of a friend, and remain there a few weeks till the search was over. My hope was that the doctor would get discouraged, and, for fear of losing my value, and also of subsequently finding my children among the missing, he would consent to sell us; and I

knew somebody would buy us. I had done all in my power to make my children comfortable during the time I expected to be separated from them. I was packing my things, when grandmother came into the room, and asked what I was doing. "I am putting my things in order," I replied. I tried to look and speak cheerfully; but her watchful eye detected something beneath the surface. She drew me towards her, and asked me to sit down. She looked earnestly at me, and said, "Linda, do you want to kill your old grandmother? Do you mean to leave your little, helpless children? I am old now, and cannot do for your babies as I once did for you."

I replied, that if I went away, perhaps their father would be able to secure their freedom.

"Ah, my child," said she, "don't trust too much to him. Stand by your own children, and suffer with them till death. Nobody respects a mother who forsakes her children; and if you leave them, you will

never have a happy moment. If you go, you will make me miserable the short time I have to live. You would be taken and brought back, and your sufferings would be dreadful. Remember poor Benjamin. Do

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give it up, Linda. Try to bear a little longer. Things may turn out better than we expect." My courage failed me, in view of the sorrow I should bring on that faithful, loving old heart. I promised that I would try longer, and that I would take nothing out of her house without her knowledge.

Whenever the children climbed on my knee, or laid their heads on my lap, she would say, "Poor little souls! what would you do without a mother? She don't love you as I do." And she would hug them to her own bosom, as if to reproach me for my want of affection; but she knew all the while that I loved them better than my life. I slept with her that night, and

it was the last time. The memory of it haunted me for many a year.

On Monday I returned to the plantation, and busied myself with preparations for the important day.

Wednesday came. It was a beautiful day, and the faces of the slaves were as bright as the sunshine. The poor creatures were merry. They were expecting little presents from the bride, and hoping for better times under her administration. I had no such hopes for them. I knew that the young wives of slaveholders often thought their authority and importance would be best established and maintained by cruelty; and what I had heard of young Mrs. Flint gave me no reason to expect that her rule over them would be less severe than that of the master and overseer. Truly, the colored race are the most cheerful and forgiving people on the face of the earth. That their masters sleep in safety is owing to their superabundance of heart; and yet they look upon their suffering with less

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pity than they would bestow on those of a horse or a dog.

I stood at the door with others to receive the bridegroom and bride. She was a handsome, delicate-looking girl, and her face flushed with emotion at sight of her new home. I thought it likely that visions of a happy future were rising before her. It made me sad; for I knew how soon clouds would come over her sunshine. She examined every part of the house, and told me she was delighted with the arrangements I had made. I was afraid old Mrs. Flint had tried to prejudice her against me, and I did my best to please her.

All passed off smoothly for me until dinner time arrived. I did not mind the embarrassment of waiting on a dinner party, for the first time in my life, half so much as I did the meeting with Dr. Flint and his wife, who would be among the guests. It was a mystery to me

why Mrs. Flint had not made her appearance at the plantation during all the time I was putting the house in order. I had not met her, face to face, for five years, and I had no wish to see her now. She was a praying woman, and, doubtless, considered my present position a special answer to her prayers. Nothing could please her better than to see me humbled and trampled upon. I was just where she would have me--in the power of a hard, unprincipled master. She did not speak to me when she took her seat at table; but her satisfied, triumphant smile, when I handed her plate, was more eloquent than words. The old doctor was not so quiet in his demonstrations. He ordered me here and there, and spoke with peculiar

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emphasis when he said "your mistress." I was drilled like a disgraced soldier. When all was over, and the last key turned, I sought my

pillow, thankful that God had appointed a season of rest for the weary.

The next day my new mistress began her housekeeping. I was not exactly appointed maid of all work; but I was to do whatever I was told. Monday evening came. It was always a busy time. On that night the slaves received their weekly allowance of food.

Three pounds of meat, a peck of corn, and perhaps a dozen herring were allowed to each man. Women received a pound and a half of meat, a peck of corn, and the same number of herring. Children over twelve years old had half the allowance of the women. The meat was cut and weighed by the foreman of the field hands, and piled on planks before the meat house. Then the second foreman went behind the building, and when the first foreman called out, "Who takes this piece of meat?" he answered by calling somebody's name. This method was resorted to as a means of preventing partiality in distributing the meat.

The young mistress came out to see how things were done on her plantation, and she soon gave a specimen of her character.

Among those in waiting for their allowance was a very old slave, who had faithfully served the Flint family through three generations.

When he hobbled up to get his bit of meat, the mistress said he was too old to have any allowance; that when niggers were too old to work, they ought to be fed on grass. Poor old man! He suffered much before he found rest in the grave.

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My mistress and I got along very well together. At the end of a week, old Mrs. Flint made us another visit, and was closeted a long time with her daughter-in-law. I had my suspicions what was the subject of the conference. The old doctor's wife had been informed that I could leave the plantation on one condition, and she was very desirous to keep me there. If she had trusted me, as I

deserved to be trusted by her, she would have had no fears of my accepting that condition. When she entered her carriage to return home, she said to young Mrs. Flint, "Don't neglect to send for them as quick as possible." My heart was on the watch all the time, and I at once concluded that she spoke of my children. The doctor came the next day, and as I entered the room to spread the tea table, I heard him say, "Don't wait any longer. Send for them to-morrow." I saw thought the plan. They thought my children's being there would fetter me to the spot, and that it was a good place to break us all in to abject submission to our lot as slaves. After the doctor left, a gentleman called, who had always manifested friendly feelings towards my grandmother and her family. Mr. Flint carried him over the plantation to show him the results of labor performed by men and women who were unpaid, miserably clothed, and half famished. The cotton crop was all they

thought of. It was duly admired, and the gentleman returned with specimens to show his friends. I was ordered to carry water to wash his hands. As I did so, he said, "Linda, how do you like your new home?" I told him I liked it as well as I expected. He replied, "They don't think you are contented, and to-morrow they are going

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to bring your children to be with you. I am sorry for you, Linda. I hope they will treat you kindly." I hurried from the room, unable to thank him. My suspicions were correct. My children were to be brought to the plantation to be "broke in."

To this day I feel grateful to the gentleman who gave me this timely information. It nerved me to immediate action.

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XVII.

THE FLIGHT.

Mr. Flint was hard pushed for house servants, and rather than lose me he had restrained his malice. I did my work faithfully, though not, of course, with a willing mind. They were evidently afraid I should leave them. Mr. Flint wished that I should sleep in the great house instead of the servants' quarters. His wife agreed to the proposition, but said I mustn't bring my bed into the house, because it would scatter feathers on her carpet. I knew when I went there that they would never think of such a thing as furnishing a bed of any kind for me and my little one. I therefore carried my own bed, and now I was forbidden to use it. I did as I was ordered. But now that I was certain my children were to be put in their power, in order to give them a stronger hold on me, I resolved to leave them that night. I remembered the grief this step would bring upon my dear old grandmother; and

nothing less than the freedom of my children would have induced me to disregard her advice. I went about my evening work with trembling steps. Mr. Flint twice called from his chamber door to inquire why the house was not locked up. I replied that I had not done my work. "You have had time enough to do it," said he. "Take care how you answer me!"

I shut all the windows, locked all the doors, and went up to the third story, to wait till midnight. How

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long those hours seemed, and how fervently I prayed that God would not forsake me in this hour of utmost need! I was about to risk every thing on the throw of a die; and if I failed, to what would become of me and my poor children? They would be made to suffer for my fault.

At half past twelve I stole softly down stairs. I stopped on the second floor, thinking I heard a noise. I felt my way down into the parlor,

and looked out of the window. The night was so intensely dark that I could see nothing. I raised the window very softly and jumped out. Large drops of rain were falling, and the darkness bewildered me. I dropped on my knees, and breathed a short prayer to God for guidance and protection. I groped my way to the road, and rushed towards the town with almost lightning speed. I arrived at my grandmother's house, but dared not see her. She would say, "Linda, you are killing me;" and I knew that would unnerve me. I tapped softly at the window of a room, occupied by a woman, who had lived in the house several years. I knew she was a faithful friend, and could be trusted with my secret. I tapped several times before she heard me. At last she raised the window, and I whispered, "Sally, I have run away. Let me in, quick." She opened the door softly, and said in low tones, "For God's sake, don't. Your grandmother is trying to buy you and de children. Mr. Sands was

here last week. He tole
her he was going away
on business, but he
wanted her to go ahead
about buying you and
de children, and he
would help her all he
could. Don't run away,
Linda. Your
grandmother is all
bowed down wid
trouble now."

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I replied, "Sally, they
are going to carry my
children to the
plantation to-morrow;
and they will never sell
them to any body so
long as they have me in
their power. Now,
would you advise me to
go back?"

"No, chile, no,"
answered she. "When
dey finds you is gone,
dey won't want de
plague ob de children;
but where is you going
to hide? Dey knows
ebery inch ob dis
house."

I told her I had a
hiding-place, and that
was all it was best for
her to know. I asked
her to go into my room
as soon as it was light,
and take all my clothes
out of my trunk, and

pack them in hers; for I
knew Mr. Flint and the
constable would be
there early to search
my room. I feared the
sight of my children
would be too much for
my full heart; but I
could not go out into
the uncertain future
without one last look. I
bent over the bed
where lay my little
Benny and baby Ellen.
Poor little ones!
fatherless and
motherless! Memories
of their father came
over me. He wanted to
be kind to them; but
they were not all to
him, as they were to my
womanly heart. I knelt
and prayed for the
innocent little sleepers.
I kissed them lightly,
and turned away.

As I was about to open
the street door, Sally
laid her hand on my
shoulder, and said,
"Linda, is you gwine all
alone? Let me call your
uncle."

"No, Sally," I replied, "I
want no one to be
brought into trouble on
my account."

I went forth into the
darkness and rain. I ran
on till I came to the

house of the friend who
was to conceal me.

Early the next morning
Mr. Flint was at my
grandmother's

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inquiring for me. She
told him she had not
seen me, and supposed
I was at the plantation.
He watched her face
narrowly, and said,
"Don't you know any
thing about her
running off?" She
assured him that she
did not. He went on to
say, "Last night she ran
off without the least
provocation. We had
treated her very kindly.
My wife liked her. She
will soon be found and
brought back. Are her
children with you?"
When told that they
were, he said, "I am
very glad to hear that.
If they are here, she
cannot be far off. If I
find out that any of my
niggers have had any
thing to do with this
damned business, I'll
give 'em five hundred
lashes." As he started to
go to his father's, he
turned round and
added, persuasively,
"Let her be brought
back, and she shall

have her children to
live with her."

The tidings made the
old doctor rave and
storm at a furious rate.
It was a busy day for
them. My
grandmother's house
was searched from top
to bottom. As my trunk
was empty, they
concluded I had taken
my clothes with me.
Before ten o'clock
every vessel northward
bound was thoroughly
examined, and the law
against harboring
fugitives was read to all
on board. At night a
watch was set over the
town. Knowing how
distressed my
grandmother would be,
I wanted to sent her a
message; but it could
not be done. Every one
who went in or out of
her house was closely
watched. The doctor
said he would take my
children, unless she
became responsible for
them; which of course
she willingly did. The
next day was spent in
searching. Before night,
the following
advertisement was
posted at every corner,
and in every public
place for miles round:--

"\$300 Reward ! Ran away from the subscriber, an intelligent, bright, mulatto girl, named Linda, 21 years of age. Five feet four inches high. Dark eyes, and black hair inclined to curl; but it can be made straight. Has a decayed spot on a front tooth. She can read and write, and in all probability will try to get to the Free States. All persons are forbidden, under penalty of the law, to harbor or employ said slave. \$150 will be given to whoever takes her in the state, and \$300 if taken out of the state and delivered to me, or lodged in jail. Dr. Flint ."

XVIII.

MONTHS OF PERIL.

The search for me was kept up with more perseverance than I had anticipated. I began to think that escape was impossible. I was in great anxiety

lest I should implicate
the friend who
harbored me. I knew
the consequences
would be frightful; and
much as I dreaded
being caught, even that
seemed better than
causing an innocent
person to suffer for
kindness to me. A week
had passed in terrible
suspense, when my
pursuers came into
such close vicinity that
I concluded they had
tracked me to my
hiding-place. I flew out
of the house, and
concealed myself in a
thicket of bushes.
There I remained in an
agony of fear for two
hours. Suddenly, a
reptile of some kind
seized my leg. In my
fright, I struck a blow
which loosened its
hold, but I could not tell
whether I had killed it;
it was so dark, I could
not see what it was; I
only knew it was
something cold and
slimy. The pain I felt
soon indicated that the
bite was poisonous. I
was compelled to leave
my place of
concealment, and I
groped my way back
into the house. The
pain had become
intense, and my friend
was startled by my look

of anguish. I asked her to prepare a poultice of warm ashes and vinegar, and I applied it to my leg, which was already much swollen. The application gave me some relief, but the swelling did not abate. The dread of being disabled was greater than the physical pain I endured.

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My friend asked an old woman, who doctored among the slaves, what was good for the bite of a snake or a lizard. She told her to steep a dozen coppers in vinegar, over night, and apply the cankered vinegar to the inflamed part.

(*) The poison of a snake is a powerful acid, and is counteracted by powerful alkalies, such as potash, ammonia, &c. The Indians are accustomed to apply wet ashes, or plunge the limb into strong lie. White men, employed to lay out railroads in snaky places, often carry ammonia with them as an antidote.--
Editor .

I had succeeded in cautiously conveying some messages to my relatives. They were harshly threatened, and despairing of my having a chance to escape, they advised me to return to my master, ask his forgiveness, and let him make an example of me. But such counsel had no influence with me. When I started upon this hazardous undertaking, I had resolved that, come what would, there should be no turning back. "Give me liberty, or give me death," was my motto. When my friend contrived to make known to my relatives the painful situation I had been in for twenty-four hours, they said no more about my going back to my master. Something must be done, and that speedily; but where to turn for help, they knew not. God in his mercy raised up "a friend in need."

Among the ladies who were acquainted with my grandmother, was one who had known her from childhood, and always been very friendly to her. She had

also known my mother
and her children, and
felt interested for them.
At this crisis of affairs
she called to see my
grandmother, as she
not unfrequently did.
She observed the sad
and troubled
expression of her face,
and asked if she knew
where Linda was, and
whether

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she was safe. My
grandmother shook her
head, without
answering. "Come,
Aunt Martha," said the
kind lady, "tell me all
about it. Perhaps I can
do something to help
you." The husband of
this lady held many
slaves, and bought and
sold slaves. She also
held a number in her
own name; but she
treated them kindly,
and would never allow
any of them to be sold.
She was unlike the
majority of
slaveholders' wives. My
grandmother looked
earnestly at her.
Something in the
expression of her face
said "Trust me!" and
she did trust her. She
listened attentively to
the details of my story,

and sat thinking for a while. At last she said, "Aunt Martha, I pity you both. If you think there is any chance of Linda's [gacute]etting to the Free States, I will conceal her for a time. But first you must solemnly promise that my name shall never be mentioned. If such a thing should become known, it would ruin me and my family. No one in my house must know of it, except the cook. She is so faithful that I would trust my own life with her; and I know she likes Linda. It is a great risk; but I trust no harm will come of it. Get word to Linda to be ready as soon as it is dark, before the patrols are out. I will send the housemaids on errands, and Betty shall go to meet Linda." The place where we were to meet was designated and agreed upon. My grandmother was unable to thank the lady for this noble deed; overcome by her emotions, she sank on her knees and sobbed like a child.

I received a message to leave my friend's house at such an hour, and go to a certain place

where a friend would
be waiting for me. As a
matter of prudence no
names were
mentioned. I had no
means of conjecturing

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who I was to meet, or
where I was going. I did
not like to move thus
blindfolded, but I had
no choice. It would not
do for me to remain
where I was. I
disguised myself,
summoned up courage
to meet the worst, and
went to the appointed
place. My friend Betty
was there; she was the
last person I expected
to see. We hurried
along in silence. The
pain in my leg was so
intense that it seemed
as if I should drop; but
fear gave me strength.
We reached the house
and entered
unobserved. Her first
words were: "Honey,
now you is safe. Dem
devils ain't coming to
search dis house. When
I get you into missis'
safe place, I will bring
some nice hot supper. I
specs you need it after
all dis skeering." Betty's
vocation led her to
think eating the most
important thing in life.

She did not realize that
my heart was too full
for me to care much
about supper.

The mistress came to
meet us, and led me up
stairs to a small room
over her own sleeping
apartment. "You will be
safe here, Linda," said
she; "I keep this room
to store away things
that are out of use. The
girls are not
accustomed to be sent
to it, and they will not
suspect any thing
unless they hear some
noise. I always keep it
locked, and Betty shall
take care of the key. But
you must be very
careful, for my sake as
well as your own; and
you must never tell my
secret; for it would ruin
me and my family. I will
keep the girls busy in
the morning, that Betty
may have a chance to
bring your breakfast;
but it will not do for
her to come to you
again till night. I will
come to see you
sometimes. Keep up
your courage. I hope
this state of things will
not last long." Betty
came with the

"nice hot supper;" and the mistress hastened down stairs to keep things straight till she returned. How my heart overflowed with gratitude! Words choked in my throat; but I could have kissed the feet of my benefactress. For that deed of Christian womanhood, may God forever bless her!

I went to sleep that night with the feeling that I was for the present the most fortunate slave in town. Morning came and filled my little cell with light. I thanked the heavenly Father for this safe retreat. Opposite my window was a pile of feather beds. On the top of these I could lie perfectly concealed, and command a view of the street through which Dr. Flint passed to his office. Anxious as I was, I felt a gleam of satisfaction when I saw him. Thus far I had outwitted him, and I triumphed over it. Who can blame slaves for being cunning? They are constantly compelled to resort to it. It is the only weapon of the weak and oppressed against the

strength of their
tyrants.

I was daily hoping to hear that my master had sold my children; for I knew who was on the watch to buy them. But Dr. Flint cared even more for revenge than he did for money. My brother William, and the good aunt who had served in his family twenty years, and my little Benny, and Ellen, who was a little over two years old, were thrust into jail, as a means of compelling my relatives to give some information about me. He swore my grandmother should never see one of them again till I was brought back. They kept these facts from me for several days. When I heard that my little ones were in a loathsome jail, my first impulse

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was to go to them. I was encountering dangers for the sake of freeing them, and must I be the cause of their death? The thought was agonizing. My benefactress tried to

soothe me by telling me that my aunt would take good care of the children while they remained in jail. But it added to my pain to think that the good old aunt, who had always been so kind to her sister's orphan children, should be shut up in prison for no other crime than loving them. I suppose my friends feared a reckless movement on my part, knowing, as they did, that my life was bound up in my children. I received a note from my brother William. It was scarcely legible, and ran thus: "Wherever you are, dear sister, I beg of you not to come here. We are all much better off than you are. If you come, you will ruin us all. They would force you to tell where you had been, or they would kill you. Take the advice of your friends; if not for the sake of me and your children, at least for the sake of those you would ruin." Poor William! He also must suffer for being my brother. I took his advice and kept quiet. My aunt was taken out of jail at the end of a month, because Mrs.

Flint could not spare her any longer. She was tired of being her own housekeeper. It was quite too fatiguing to order her dinner and eat it too. My children remained in jail, where brother William did all he could for their comfort. Betty went to see them sometimes, and brought me tidings. She was not permitted to enter the jail; but William would hold them up to the grated window while she chatted with them. When she repeated their prattle, and told me how they

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wanted to see their ma, my tears would flow. Old Betty would exclaim, "Lors, chile! what's you crying 'bout? Dem young uns vil kill you dead. Don't be so chick'n hearted! If you does, you vil nebber git thro' dis world."

Good old soul! She had gone through the world childless. She had never had little ones to clasp their arms round her neck; she had never seen their soft eyes looking into hers; no

sweet little voices had called her mother; she had never pressed her own infants to her heart, with the feeling that even in fetters there was something to live for. How could she realize my feelings? Betty's husband loved children dearly, and wondered why God had denied them to him. He expressed great sorrow when he came to Betty with the tidings that Ellen had been taken out of jail and carried to Dr. Flint's. She had the measles a short time before they carried her to jail, and the disease had left her eyes affected. The doctor had taken her home to attend to them. My children had always been afraid of the doctor and his wife. They had never been inside of their house. Poor little Ellen cried all day to be carried back to prison. The instincts of childhood are true. She knew she was loved in the jail. Her screams and sobs annoyed Mrs. Flint. Before night she called one of the slaves, and said, "Here, Bill, carry this brat back to the jail. I can't stand her noise. If she would be

quiet I should like to
keep the little minx.
She would make a
handy waiting-maid for
my daughter by and by.
But if she staid here,
with her white face, I
suppose I should either
kill her or spoil her. I
hope the doctor will

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sell them as far as wind
and water can carry
them. As for their
mother, her ladyship
will find out yet what
she gets by running
away. She hasn't so
much feeling for her
children as a cow has
for its calf. If she had,
she would have come
back long ago, to get
them out of jail, and
save all this expense
and trouble. The
good-for-nothing
hussy! When she is
caught, she shall stay in
jail, in irons, for one six
months, and then be
sold to a sugar
plantation. I shall see
her broke in yet. What
do you stand there for,
Bill? Why don't you go
off with the brat? Mind,
now, that you don't let
any of the niggers
speak to her in the
street!"

When these remarks were reported to me, I smiled at Mrs. Flint's saying that she should either kill my child or spoil her. I thought to myself there was very little danger of the latter. I have always considered it as one of God's special providences that Ellen screamed till she was carried back to jail.

That same night Dr. Flint was called to a patient, and did not return till near morning. Passing my grandmother's, he saw a light in the house, and thought to himself, "Perhaps this has something to do with Linda." He knocked, and the door was opened. "What calls you up so early?" said he. "I saw your light, and I thought I would just stop and tell you that I have found out where Linda is. I know where to put my hands on her, and I shall have her before twelve o'clock." When he had turned away, my grandmother and my uncle looked anxiously at each other. They did not know whether or not it was merely one of the doctor's tricks to

frighten them. In their
uncertainty, they
thought it was best to
have a

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message conveyed to
my friend Betty.
Unwilling to alarm her
mistress, Betty
resolved to dispose of
me herself. She came to
me, and told me to rise
and dress quickly. We
hurried down stairs,
and across the yard,
into the kitchen. She
locked the door, and
lifted up a plank in the
floor. A buffalo skin and
a bit of carpet were
spread for me to lie on,
and a quilt thrown over
me. "Stay dar," said she,
"till I sees if dey know
'bout you. Dey say dey
vil put thar hans on you
afore twelve o'clock. If
dey did know what you
are, dey won't know
now. Dey'll be
disapinted dis time.
Dat's all I got to say. If
dey comes rummagin
'mong my things, dey'll
get one bressed sarssin
from dis 'ere nigger." In
my shallow bed I had
but just room enough
to bring my hands to
my face to keep the
dust out of my eyes; for
Betty walked over me

twenty times in an
hour, passing from the
dresser to the fireplace.
When she was alone, I
could hear her
pronouncing
anathemas over Dr.
Flint and all his tribe,
every now and then
saying, with a
chuckling laugh, "Dis
nigger's too cute for
'em dis time." When the
housemaids were
about, she had sly ways
of drawing them out,
that I might hear what
they would say. She
would repeat stories
she had heard about
my being in this, or
that, or the other place.
To which they would
answer, that I was not
fool enough to be
staying round there;
that I was in
Philadelphia or New
York before this time.
When all were abed
and asleep, Betty raised
the plank, and said,
"Come out, chile; come
out. Dey don't know
nottin 'bout you. 'Twas
only white folks' lies, to
skeer de niggers."
Some days after this
adventure I had a much
worse

fright. As I sat very still
in my retreat above
stairs, cheerful visions
floated through my
mind. I thought Dr.
Flint would soon get
discouraged, and
would be willing to sell
my children, when he
lost all hopes of making
them the means of my
discovery. I knew who
was ready to buy them.
Suddenly I heard a
voice that chilled my
blood. The sound was
too familiar to me, it
had been too dreadful,
for me not to recognize
at once my old master.
He was in the house,
and I at once concluded
he had come to seize
me. I looked round in
terror. There was no
way of escape. The
voice receded. I
supposed the constable
was with him, and they
were searching the
house. In my alarm I
did not forget the
trouble I was bringing
on my generous
benefactress. It seemed
as if I were born to
bring sorrow on all
who befriended me,
and that was the
bitterest drop in the
bitter cup of my life.
After a while I heard
approaching footsteps;
the key was turned in
my door. I braced

myself against the wall
to keep from falling. I
ventured to look up,
and there stood my
kind benefactress
alone. I was too much
overcome to speak, and
sunk down upon the
floor.

"I thought you would
hear your master's
voice," she said; "and
knowing you would be
terrified, I came to tell
you there is nothing to
fear. You may even
indulge in a laugh at
the old gentleman's
expense. He is so sure
you are in New York,
that he came to borrow
five hundred dollars to
go in pursuit of you. My
sister had some money
to loan on interest. He
has obtained it, and
proposes to start for
New York to-night. So,
for the present, you see
you are safe. The
doctor will merely
lighten his pocket
hunting after the bird
he has left behind."

XIX.
THE CHILDREN
SOLD.

The doctor came back from New York, of course without accomplishing his purpose. He had expended considerable money, and was rather disheartened. My brother and the children had now been in jail two months, and that also was some expense. My friends thought it was a favorable time to work on his discouraged feelings. Mr. Sands sent a speculator to offer him nine hundred dollars for my brother William, and eight hundred for the two children. These were high prices, as slaves were then selling; but the offer was rejected. If it had been merely a question of money, the doctor would have sold any boy of Benny's age for two hundred dollars; but he could not bear to give up the power of revenge. But he was hard pressed for money, and he revolved the matter in his mind. He knew that if he could keep Ellen till she was fifteen, he could sell her for a high

price; but I presume he reflected that she might die, or might be stolen away. At all events, he came to the conclusion that he had, better accept the slave-trader's offer. Meeting him in the street, he inquired when he would leave town. "To-day, at ten o'clock," he replied. "Ah, do you go so soon?" said the doctor; "I have been reflecting upon your proposition, and I have concluded to let you have the three negroes if you will say nineteen hundred dollars." After some parley,

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the trader agreed to his terms. He wanted the bill of sale drawn up and signed immediately, as he had a great deal to attend to during the short time he remained in town. The doctor went to the jail and told William he would take him back into his service if he would promise to behave himself; but he replied that he would rather be sold. "And you shall be sold, you ungrateful rascal!" exclaimed the doctor. In less than an hour the

money was paid, the papers were signed, sealed, and delivered, and my brother and children were in the hands of the trader.

It was a hurried transaction; and after it was over, the doctor's characteristic caution returned. He went back to the speculator, and said, "Sir, I have come to lay you under obligations of a thousand dollars not to sell any of those negroes in this state." "You come too late," replied the trader; "our bargain is closed." He had, in fact, already sold them to Mr. Sands, but he did not mention it. The doctor required him to put irons on "that rascal, Bill," and to pass through the back streets when he took his gang out of town. The trader was privately instructed to concede to his wishes. My good old aunt went to the jail to bid the children good by, supposing them to be the speculator's property, and that she should never see them again. As she held Benny in her lap, he said, "Aunt Nancy, I want to show you something." He led her

to the door and showed her a long row of marks, saying, "Uncle Will taught me to count. I have made a mark for every day I have been here, and it is sixty days. It is a long time; and the speculator is going to take me and Ellen away. He's a bad man. It's

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wrong for him to take grandmother's children. I want to go to my mother."

My grandmother was told that the children would be restored to her, but she was requested to act as if they were really to be sent away. Accordingly, she made up a bundle of clothes and went to the jail. When she arrived, she found William handcuffed among the gang, and the children in the trader's cart. The scene seemed too much like reality. She was afraid there might have been some deception or mistake. She fainted, and was carried home.

When the wagon stopped at the hotel, several gentlemen

came out and proposed to purchase William, but the trader refused their offers, without stating that he was already sold. And now came the trying hour for that drove of human beings, driven away like cattle, to be sold they knew not where. Husbands were torn from wives, parents from children, never to look upon each other again this side the grave. There was wringing of hands and cries of despair.

Dr. Flint had the supreme satisfaction of seeing the wagon leave town, and Mrs. Flint had the gratification of supposing that my children were going "as far as wind and water would carry them." According to agreement, my uncle followed the wagon some miles, until they came to an old farm house. There the trader took the irons from William, and as he did so, he said, "You are a damned clever fellow. I should like to own you myself. Them gentlemen that wanted to buy you said you was a bright, honest chap, and I must git you a

good home. I guess
your old master will
swear to-morrow, and
call himself an old fool
for

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selling the children. I
reckon he'll never git
their mammy back
again. I expect she's
made tracks for the
north. Good by, old boy.
Remember, I have done
you a good turn. You
must thank me by
coaxing all the pretty
gals to go with me next
fall. That's going to be
my last trip. This
trading in niggers is a
bad business for a
fellow that's got any
heart. Move on, you
fellows!" And the gang
went on, God alone
knows where.

Much as I despise and
detest the class of
slave-traders, whom I
regard as the vilest
wretches on earth, I
must do this man the
justice to say that he
seemed to have some
feeling. He took a fancy
to William in the jail,
and wanted to buy him.
When he heard the
story of my children, he
was willing to aid them
in getting out of Dr.
Flint's power, even

without charging the customary fee.

My uncle procured a wagon and carried William and the children back to town. Great was the joy in my grandmother's house! The curtains were closed, and the candles lighted. The happy grandmother cuddled the little ones to her bosom. They hugged her, and kissed her, and clapped their hands, and shouted. She knelt down and poured forth one of her heartfelt prayers of thanksgiving to God. The father was present for a while; and though such a "parental relation" as existed between him and my children takes slight hold of the hearts or consciences of slaveholders, it must be that he experienced some moments of pure joy in witnessing the happiness he had imparted.

I had no share in the rejoicings of that evening.

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The events of the day had not come to my

knowledge. And now I
will tell you something
that happened to me;
though you will,
perhaps, think it
illustrates the
superstition of slaves. I
sat in my usual place
on the floor near the
window, where I could
hear much that was
said in the street
without being seen.
The family had retired
for the night, and all
was still. I sat there
thinking of my
children, when I heard
a low strain of music. A
band of serenaders
were under the
window, playing
"Home, sweet home." I
listened till the sounds
did not seem like
music, but like the
moaning of children. It
seemed as if my heart
would burst. I rose
from my sitting
posture, and knelt. A
streak of moonlight
was on the floor before
me, and in the midst of
it appeared the forms
of my two children.
They vanished; but I
had seen them
distinctly. Some will
call it a dream, others a
vision. I know not how
to account for it, but it
made a strong
impression on my
mind, and I felt certain

something had
happened to my little
ones.

I had not seen Betty
since morning. Now I
heard her softly
turning the key. As
soon as she entered, I
clung to her, and
begged her to let me
know whether my
children were dead, or
whether they were
sold; for I had seen
their spirits in my
room, and I was sure
something had
happened to them.
"Lor, chile," said she,
putting her arms round
me, "you's got de
highsterics. I'll sleep
wide you to-night,
'cause you'll make a
noise, and ruin missis.
Something has stirred
you up mightily. When
you is done crying, I'll
talk wid you. De
chillern is well, and
mighty happy. I seed
'em myself. Does dat
satisfy you? Dar, chile,
be still! Somebody

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vill hear you." I tried to
obey her. She lay down,
and was soon sound
asleep; but no sleep
would come to my
eyelids.

At dawn, Betty was up
and off to the kitchen.
The hours passed on,
and the vision of the
night kept constantly
recurring to my
thoughts. After a while
I heard the voices of
two women in the
entry. In one of them I
recognized the
housemaid. The other
said to her, "Did you
know Linda Brent's
children was sold to
the speculator
yesterday. They say ole
massa Flint was mighty
glad to see 'em drove
out of town; but they
say they've come back
again. I 'spect it's all
their daddy's doings.
They say he's bought
William too. Lor! how it
will take hold of ole
massa Flint! I'm going
roun' to aunt Marthy's
to see 'bout it."

I bit my lips till the
blood came to keep
from crying out. Were
my children with their
grandmother, or had
the speculator carried
them off? The suspense
was dreadful. Would
Betty never come, and
tell me the truth about
it? At last she came,
and I eagerly repeated
what I had overheard.
Her face was one
broad, bright smile.

"Lor, you foolish ting!"
said she. "I'se gwine to
tell you all 'bout it. De
gals is eating thar
breakfast, and missus
tole me to let her tell
you; but, poor creeter!
t'aint right to keep you
waitin', and I'se gwine
to tell you. Brudder,
children, all is bought
by de daddy! I'se laugh
more dan nuff, thinking
'bout ole massa Flint.
Lor, how he vill swar!
He's got ketched dis
time, any how; but I
must be getting out o'
dis, or dem gals vill
come and ketch me. "

Betty went off
laughing; and I said to
myself, "Can it be true
that my children are
free? I have not
suffered for them in
vain. Thank God!"

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Great surprise was
expressed when it was
known that my
children had returned
to their grandmother's.
The news spread
through the town, and
many a kind word was
bestowed on the little
ones.

Dr. Flint went to my
grandmother's to

ascertain who was the owner of my children, and she informed him. "I expected as much," said he. "I am glad to hear it. I have had news from Linda lately, and I shall soon have her. You need never expect to see her free. She shall be my slave as long as I live, and when I am dead she shall be the slave of my children. If I ever find out that you or Phillip had any thing to do with her running off I'll kill him. And if I meet William in the street, and he presumes to look at me, I'll flog him within an inch of his life. Keep those brats out of my sight!"

As he turned to leave, my grandmother said something to remind him of his own doings. He looked back upon her, as if he would have been glad to strike her to the ground.

I had my season of joy and thanksgiving. It was the first time since my childhood that I had experienced any real happiness. I heard of the old doctor's threats, but they no longer had the same power to trouble me. The darkest cloud that hung

over my life had rolled away. Whatever slavery might do to me, it could not shackle my children. If I fell a sacrifice, my little ones were saved. It was well for me that my simple heart believed all that had been promised for their welfare. It is always better to trust than to doubt.

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XX.

NEW PERILS.

The doctor, more exasperated than ever, again tried to revenge himself on my relatives. He arrested uncle Phillip on the charge of having aided my flight. He was carried before a court, and swore truly that he knew nothing of my intention to escape, and that he had not seen me since I left my master's plantation. The doctor then demanded that he should give bail for five hundred dollars that he would have nothing to do with me. Several gentlemen offered to be security for him; but Mr. Sands told him he

had better go back to jail, and he would see that he came out without giving bail.

The news of his arrest was carried to my grandmother, who conveyed it to Betty. In the kindness of her heart, she again stowed me away under the floor; and as she walked back and forth, in the performance of her culinary duties, she talked apparently to herself, but with the intention that I should hear what was going on. I hoped that my uncle's imprisonment would last but few days; still I was anxious. I thought it likely Dr. Flint would do his utmost to taunt and insult him, and I was afraid my uncle might lose control of himself, and retort in some way that would be construed into a punishable offence; and I was well aware that in court his word would not be taken against any white man's. The search for me

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was renewed. Something had excited suspicions that I was in

the vicinity. They searched the house I was in. I heard their steps and their voices. At night, when all were asleep, Betty came to release me from my place of confinement. The fright I had undergone, the constrained posture, and the dampness of the ground, made me ill for several days. My uncle was soon after taken out of prison; but the movements of all my relatives, and of all our friends, were very closely watched.

We all saw that I could not remain where I was much longer. I had already staid longer than was intended, and I knew my presence must be a source of perpetual anxiety to my kind benefactress. During this time, my friends had laid many plans for my escape, but the extreme vigilance of my persecutors made it impossible to carry them into effect.

One morning I was much startled by hearing somebody trying to get into my room. Several keys were tried, but none fitted. I instantly

conjectured it was one of the housemaids; and I concluded she must either have heard some noise in the room, or have noticed the entrance of Betty. When my friend came, at her usual time, I told her what had happened. "I knows who it was," said she. "'Pend upon it, 'twas dat Jenny. Dat nigger allers got de debble in her." I suggested that she might have seen or heard something that excited her curiosity.

"Tut! tut! chile!" exclaimed Betty, "she ain't seen notin', nor hearn notin'. She only 'spects something. Dat's all. She wants to fine out who hab cut and make my gownd. But she won't nebber know. Dat's sartin. I'll git missis to fix her."

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I reflected a moment, and said, "Betty, I must leave here to-night."

"Do as you tink best, poor chile," she replied. "I'se mighty 'fraid dat 'ere nigger vill pop on you some time."

She reported the incident to her mistress, and received orders to keep Jenny busy in the kitchen till she could see my uncle Phillip. He told her he would send a friend for me that very evening. She told him she hoped I was going to the north, for it was very dangerous for me to remain any where in the vicinity. Alas, it was not an easy thing, for one in my situation, to go to the north. In order to leave the coast quite clear for me, she went into the country to spend the day with her brother, and took Jenny with her. She was afraid to come and bid me good by, but she left a kind message with Betty. I heard her carriage roll from the door, and I never again saw her who had so generously befriended the poor, trembling fugitive! Though she was a slaveholder, to this day my heart blesses her!

I had not the slightest idea where I was going. Betty brought me a suit of sailor's clothes,--jacket, trowsers, and tarpaulin hat. She gave me a

small bundle, saying I
might need it where I
was going. In cheery
tones, she exclaimed,
"I'se so glad you is
gwine to free parts!
Don't forget ole Betty.
P'raps I'll come 'long by
and by."

I tried to tell her how
grateful I felt for all her
kindness, but she
interrupted me. "I don't
want no tanks, honey.
I'se glad I could help
you, and I hope de good
Lord vill open de path
for you. I'se gwine wid

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you to de lower gate.
Put your hands in your
pockets, and walk
rickety, like de sailors."
I performed to her
satisfaction. At the gate
I found Peter, a young
colored man, waiting
for me. I had known
him for years. He had
been an apprentice to
my father, and had
always borne a good
character. I was not
afraid to trust to him.
Betty bade me a
hurried good by, and
we walked off. "Take
courage, Linda," said
my friend Peter. "I've
got a dagger, and no
man shall take you

from me, unless he passes over my dead body."

It was a long time since I had taken a walk out of doors, and the fresh air revived me. It was also pleasant to hear a human voice speaking to me above a whisper. I passed several people whom I knew, but they did not recognize me in my disguise. I prayed internally that, for Peter's sake, as well as my own, nothing might occur to bring out his dagger. We walked on till we came to the wharf. My aunt Nancy's husband was a seafaring man, and it had been deemed necessary to let him into our secret. He took me into his boat, rowed out to a vessel not far distant, and hoisted me on board. We three were the only occupants of the vessel. I now ventured to ask what they proposed to do with me. They said I was to remain on board till near dawn, and then they would hide me in Snaky Swamp, till my uncle Phillip had prepared a place of concealment for me. If the vessel had been bound north, it would

have been of no avail to
me, for it would
certainly have been
searched. About four
o'clock, we were again
seated in the boat, and
rowed three miles to
the swamp. My fear of
snakes had been

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increased by the
venomous bite I had
received, and I dreaded
to enter this
hiding-place. But I was
in no situation to
choose, and I gratefully
accepted the best that
my poor, persecuted
friends could do for me.
Peter landed first, and
with a large knife cut a
path through bamboos
and briers of all
descriptions. He came
back, took me in his
arms, and carried me to
a seat made among the
bamboos. Before we
reached it, we were
covered with hundreds
of mosquitos. In an
hour's time they had so
poisoned my flesh that
I was a pitiful sight to
behold. As the light
increased, I saw snake
after snake crawling
round us. I had been
accustomed to the sight
of snakes all my life,
but these were larger

than any I had ever seen. To this day I shudder when I remember that morning. As evening approached, the number of snakes increased so much that we were continually obliged to thrash them with sticks to keep them from crawling over us. The bamboos were so high and so thick that it was impossible to see beyond a very short distance. Just before it became dark we procured a seat nearer to the entrance of the swamp, being fearful of losing our way back to the boat. It was not long before we heard the paddle of oars, and the low whistle, which had been agreed upon as a signal. We made haste to enter the boat, and were rowed back to the vessel. I passed a wretched night; for the heat of the swamp, the mosquitos, and the constant terror of snakes, had brought on a burning fever. I had just dropped asleep, when they came and told me it was time to go back to that horrid swamp. I could scarcely summon courage to rise. But even those

large, venomous snakes
were less dreadful

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to my imagination than
the white men in that
community called
civilized. This time
Peter took a quantity of
tobacco to burn, to
keep off the mosquitos.
It produced the desired
effect on them, but gave
me nausea and severe
headache. At dark we
returned to the vessel. I
had been so sick during
the day, that Peter
declared I should go
home that night, if the
devil himself was on
patrol. They told me a
place of concealment
had been provided for
me at my
grandmother's. I could
not imagine how it was
possible to hide me in
her house, every nook
and corner of which
was known to the Flint
family. They told me to
wait and see. We were
rowed ashore, and
went boldly through
the streets, to my
grandmother's. I wore
my sailor's clothes, and
had blackened my face
with charcoal. I passed
several people whom I
knew. The father of my
children came so near

that I brushed against his arm; but he had no idea who it was.

"You must make the most of this walk," said my friend Peter, "for you may not have another very soon."

I thought his voice sounded sad. It was kind of him to conceal from me what a dismal hole was to be my home for a long, long time.

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XXI. THE LOOPHOLE OF RETREAT.

A SMALL shed had been added to my grandmother's house years ago. Some boards were laid across the joists at the top, and between these boards and the roof was a very small garret, never occupied by any thing but rats and mice. It was a pent roof, covered with nothing but shingles, according to the southern custom for such buildings. The garret was only nine feet long and seven wide. The highest part

was three feet high, and sloped down abruptly to the loose board floor. There was no admission for either light or air. My uncle Philip, who was a carpenter, had very skilfully made a concealed trap-door, which communicated with the storeroom. He had been doing this while I was waiting in the swamp. The storeroom opened upon a piazza. To this hole I was conveyed as soon as I entered the house. The air was stifling; the darkness total. A bed had been spread on the floor. I could sleep quite comfortably on one side; but the slope was so sudden that I could not turn on the other without hitting the roof. The rats and mice ran over my bed; but I was weary, and I slept such sleep as the wretched may, when a tempest has passed over them. Morning came. I knew it only by the noises I heard; for in my small den day and night were all the same. I suffered for air even more than for light. But I was not

comfortless. I heard the
voices of my children.

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There was joy and
there was sadness in
the sound. It made my
tears flow. How I
longed to speak to
them! I was eager to
look on their faces; but
there was no hole, no
crack, through which I
could peep. This
continued darkness
was oppressive. It
seemed horrible to sit
or lie in a cramped
position day after day,
without one gleam of
light. Yet I would have
chosen this, rather than
my lot as a slave,
though white people
considered it an easy
one; and it was so
compared with the fate
of others. I was never
cruelly over-worked; I
was never lacerated
with the whip from
head to foot; I was
never so beaten and
bruised that I could not
turn from one side to
the other; I never had
my heel-strings cut to
prevent my running
away; I was never
chained to a log and
forced to drag it about,
while I toiled in the
fields from morning till
night; I was never
branded with hot iron,

or torn by
bloodhounds. On the
contrary, I had always
been kindly treated,
and tenderly cared for,
until I came into the
hands of Dr. Flint. I had
never wished for
freedom till then. But
though my life in
slavery was
comparatively devoid
of hardships, God pity
the woman who is
compelled to lead such
a life!

My food was passed up
to me through the
trap-door my uncle had
contrived; and my
grandmother, my uncle
Phillip, and aunt Nancy
would seize such
opportunities as they
could, to mount up
there and chat with me
at the opening. But of
course this was not
safe in the daytime. It
must all be done in
darkness. It was
impossible for me to
move in an erect
position, but I crawled
about my den for
exercise. One day I hit
my head against
something, and found it
was a gimlet.

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My uncle had left it
sticking there when he

made the trap-door. I was as rejoiced as Robinson Crusoe could have been at finding such a treasure. It put a lucky thought into my head. I said to myself, "Now I will have some light. Now I will see my children." I did not dare to begin my work during the daytime, for fear of attracting attention. But I groped round; and having found the side next the street, where I could frequently see my children, I stuck the gimlet in and waited for evening. I bored three rows of holes, one above another; then I bored out the interstices between. I thus succeeded in making one hole about an inch long and an inch broad. I sat by it till late into the night, to enjoy the little whiff of air that floated in. In the morning I watched for my children. The first person I saw in the street was Dr. Flint. I had a shuddering, superstitious feeling that it was a bad omen. Several familiar faces passed by. At last I heard the merry laugh of children, and presently two sweet little faces were looking

up at me, as though
they knew I was there,
and were conscious of
the joy they imparted.
How I longed to tell
them I was there!

My condition was now
a little improved. But
for weeks I was
tormented by hundreds
of little red insects, fine
as a needle's point, that
pierced through my
skin, and produced an
intolerable burning.
The good grandmother
gave me herb teas and
cooling medicines, and
finally I got rid of them.
The heat of my den was
intense, for nothing but
thin shingles protected
me from the scorching
summer's sun. But I
had my consolations.
Through my
peeping-hole I could
watch the children, and
when they were near
enough, I could hear
their talk.

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Aunt Nancy brought me
all the news she could
hear at Dr. Flint's. From
her I learned that the
doctor had written to
New York to a colored
woman, who had been
born and raised in our
neighborhood, and had
breathed his

contaminating atmosphere. He offered her a reward if she could find out any thing about me. I know not what was the nature of her reply; but he soon after started for New York in haste, saying to his family that he had business of importance to transact. I peeped at him as he passed on his way to the steam-boat. It was a satisfaction to have miles of land and water between us, even for a little while; and it was a still greater satisfaction to know that he believed me to be in the Free States. My little den seemed less dreary than it had done. He returned, as he did from his former journey to New York, without obtaining any satisfactory information. When he passed our house next morning, Benny was standing at the gate. He had heard them say that he had gone to find me, and he called out, "Dr. Flint, did you bring my mother home? I want to see her." The doctor stamped his foot at him in a rage, and exclaimed, "Get out of the way, you little damned rascal! If you

don't, I'll cut off your head."

Benny ran terrified into the house, saying, "You can't put me in jail again. I don't belong to you now." It was well that the wind carried the words away from the doctor's ear. I told my grandmother of it, when we had our next conference at the trap-door; and begged of her not to allow the children to be impertinent to the irascible old man.

Autumn came, with a pleasant abatement of heat.

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My eyes had become accustomed to the dim light, and by holding my book or work in a certain position near the aperture I contrived to read and sew. That was a great relief to the tedious monotony of my life. But when winter came, the cold penetrated through the thin shingle roof, and I was dreadfully chilled. The winters there are not so long, or so severe, as in northern latitudes; but the houses are not

built to shelter from cold, and my little den was peculiarly comfortless. The kind grandmother brought me bed-clothes and warm drinks. Often I was obliged to lie in bed all day to keep comfortable; but with all my precautions, my shoulders and feet were frostbitten. O, those long, gloomy days, with no object for my eye to rest upon, and no thoughts to occupy my mind, except the dreary past and the uncertain future! I was thankful when there came a day sufficiently mild for me to wrap myself up and sit at the loophole to watch the passers by. Southerners have the habit of stopping and talking in the streets, and I heard many conversations not intended to meet my ears. I heard slave-hunters planning how to catch some poor fugitive. Several times I heard allusions to Dr. Flint, myself, and the history of my children, who, perhaps, were playing near the gate. One would say, "I wouldn't move my little finger to catch her, as old Flint's property."

Another would say, "I'll catch any nigger for the reward. A man ought to have what belongs to him, if he is a damned brute." The opinion was often expressed that I was in the Free States. Very rarely did any one suggest that I might be in the vicinity. Had the least suspicion rested on my grand mother's house, it would have been burned to the ground.

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But it was the last place they thought of. Yet there was no place, where slavery existed, that could have afforded me so good a place of concealment. Dr. Flint and his family repeatedly tried to coax and bribe my children to tell something they had heard said about me. One day the doctor took them into a shop, and offered them some bright little silver pieces and gay handkerchiefs if they would tell where their mother was. Ellen shrank away from him, and would not speak; but Benny spoke up, and said, "Dr. Flint, I don't know where my

mother is. I guess she's in New York; and when you go there again, I wish you'd ask her to come home, for I want to see her; but if you put her in jail, or tell her you'll cut her head off, I'll tell her to go right back."

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XXII. CHRISTMAS FESTIVITIES.

Christmas was approaching. Grandmother brought me materials, and I busied myself making some new garments and little playthings for my children. Were it not that hiring day is near at hand, and many families are fearfully looking forward to the probability of separation in a few days, Christmas might be a happy season for the poor slaves. Even slave mothers try to gladden the hearts of their little ones on that occasion. Benny and Ellen had their Christmas stockings filled. Their imprisoned mother could not have

the privilege of
witnessing their
surprise and joy. But I
had the pleasure of
peeping at them as
they went into the
street with their new
suits on. I heard Benny
ask a little playmate
whether Santa Claus
brought him any thing.
"Yes," replied the boy;
"but Santa Claus ain't a
real man. It's the
children's mothers that
put things into the
stockings." "No, that
can't be," replied Benny,
"for Santa Claus
brought Ellen and me
these new clothes, and
my mother has been
gone this long time."

How I longed to tell
him that his mother
made those garments,
and that many a tear
fell on them while she
worked!

Every child rises early
on Christmas morning
to see the Johnkannaus.
Without them,
Christmas would

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be shorn of its greatest
attraction. They consist
of companies of slaves
from the plantations,
generally of the lower
class. Two athletic men,
in calico wrappers,
have a net thrown over

them, covered with all manner of bright-colored stripes. Cows' tails are fastened to their backs, and their heads are decorated with horns. A box, covered with sheepskin, is called the gumbo box. A dozen beat on this, while others strike triangles and jawbones, to which bands of dancers keep time. For a month previous they are composing songs, which are sung on this occasion. These companies, of a hundred each, turn out early in the morning, and are allowed to go round till twelve o'clock, begging for contributions. Not a door is left unvisited where there is the least chance of obtaining a penny or a glass of rum. They do not drink while they are out, but carry the rum home in jugs, to have a carousal. These Christmas donations frequently amount to twenty or thirty dollars. It is seldom that any white man or child refuses to give them a trifle. If he does, they regale his ears with the following song:--

"Poor massa, so dey say;
Down in de heel, so dey say;
Got no money, so dey say;
Not one shillin, so dey say;
God A'mighty bress you, so
dey say."

Christmas is a day of feasting, both with white and colored people. Slaves, who are lucky enough to have a few shillings, are sure to spend them for good eating; and many a turkey and pig is captured, without saying, "By your leave, sir." Those who cannot obtain

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these, cook a 'possum, or a raccoon, from which savory dishes can be made. My grandmother raised poultry and pigs for sale; and it was her established custom to have both a turkey and a pig roasted for Christmas dinner. On this occasion, I was warned to keep extremely quiet, because two guests had been invited. One was the town constable, and the other was a free colored man, who

tried to pass himself off for white, and who was always ready to do any mean work for the sake of currying favor with white people. My grandmother had a motive for inviting them. She managed to take them all over the house. All the rooms on the lower floor were thrown open for them to pass in and out; and after dinner, they were invited up stairs to look at a fine mocking bird my uncle had just brought home. There, too, the rooms were all thrown open, that they might look in. When I heard them talking on the piazza, my heart almost stood still. I knew this colored man had spent many nights hunting for me. Every body knew he had the blood of a slave father in his veins; but for the sake of passing himself off for white, he was ready to kiss the slaveholders' feet. How I despised him! As for the constable, he wore no false colors. The duties of his office were despicable, but he was superior to his companion, inasmuch as he did not pretend to be what he was not. Any white man, who

could raise money
enough to buy a slave,
would have considered
himself degraded by
being a constable; but
the office enabled its
possessor to exercise
authority. If he found
any slave out after nine
o'clock, he could

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whip him as much as
he liked; and that was a
privilege to be coveted.
When the guests were
ready to depart, my
grandmother gave each
of them some of her
nice pudding, as a
present for their wives.
Through my peep-hole
I saw them go out of
the gate, and I was glad
when it closed after
them. So passed the
first Christmas in my
den.

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XXIII.

STILL IN PRISON.

When spring returned,
and I took in the little
patch of green the
aperture commanded, I
asked myself how
many more summers

and winters I must be condemned to spend thus. I longed to draw in a plentiful draught of fresh air, to stretch my cramped limbs, to have room to stand erect, to feel the earth under my feet again. My relatives were constantly on the lookout for a chance of escape; but none offered that seemed practicable, and even tolerably safe. The hot summer came again, and made the turpentine drop from the thin roof over my head.

During the long nights I was restless for want of air, and I had no room to toss and turn. There was but one compensation; the atmosphere was so stifled that even mosquitos would not condescend to buzz in it. With all my detestation of Dr. Flint, I could hardly wish him a worse punishment, either in this world or that which is to come, than to suffer what I suffered in one single summer. Yet the laws allowed him to be out in the free air, while I, guiltless of crime, was pent up here, as the only means of avoiding

the cruelties the laws
allowed him to inflict
upon me! I don't know
what kept life within
me. Again and again, I
thought I should die
before long; but I saw
the leaves of another
autumn whirl through
the air, and felt the
touch of another
winter. In summer the
most terrible

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thunder storms were
acceptable, for the rain
came through the roof,
and I rolled up my bed
that it might cool the
hot boards under it.
Later in the season,
storms sometimes wet
my clothes through and
through, and that was
not comfortable when
the air grew chilly.
Moderate storms I
could keep out by
filling the chinks with
oakum.

But uncomfortable as
my situation was, I had
glimpses of things out
of doors, which made
me thankful for my
wretched hiding-place.
One day I saw a slave
pass our gate,
muttering, "It's his
own, and he can kill it if
he will." My
grandmother told me
that woman's history.
Her mistress had that

day seen her baby for the first time, and in the lineaments of its fair face she saw a likeness to her husband. She turned the bondwoman and her child out of doors, and forbade her ever to return. The slave went to her master, and told him what had happened. He promised to talk with her mistress, and make it all right. The next day she and her baby were sold to a Georgia trader.

Another time I saw a woman rush wildly by, pursued by two men. She was a slave, the wet nurse of her mistress's children. For some trifling offence her mistress ordered her to be stripped and whipped. To escape the degradation and the torture, she rushed to the river, jumped in, and ended her wrongs in death.

Senator Brown, of Mississippi, could not be ignorant of many such facts as these, for they are of frequent occurrence in every Southern State. Yet he stood up in the Congress of the United States, and declared that slavery was "a

great moral, social, and
political blessing;

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a blessing to the
master, and a blessing
to the slave!"

I suffered much more
during the second
winter than I did
during the first. My
limbs were benumbed
by inaction, and the
cold filled them with
cramp. I had a very
painful sensation of
coldness in my head;
even my face and
tongue stiffened, and I
lost the power of
speech. Of course it
was impossible, under
the circumstances, to
summon any physician.
My brother William
came and did all he
could for me. Uncle
Phillip also watched
tenderly over me; and
poor grandmother
crept up and down to
inquire whether there
were any signs of
returning life. I was
restored to
consciousness by the
dashing of cold water
in my face, and found
myself leaning against
my brother's arm,
while he bent over me
with streaming eyes.
He afterwards told me

he thought I was dying,
for I had been in an
unconscious state
sixteen hours. I next
became delirious, and
was in great danger of
betraying myself and
my friends. To prevent
this, they stupefied me
with drugs. I remained
in bed six weeks, weary
in body and sick at
heart. How to get
medical advice was the
question. William
finally went to a
Thompsonian doctor,
and described himself
as having all my pains
and aches. He returned
with herbs, roots, and
ointment. He was
especially charged to
rub on the ointment by
a fire; but how could a
fire be made in my little
den? Charcoal in a
furnace was tried, but
there was no outlet for
the gas, and it nearly
cost me my life.
Afterwards coals,
already kindled, were
brought up in an iron
pan, and placed on
bricks. I was so weak,
and it was so long since
I had enjoyed the
warmth of a fire,

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that those few coals
actually made me

weep. I think the medicines did me some good; but my recovery was very slow. Dark thoughts passed through my mind as I lay there day after day. I tried to be thankful for my little cell, dismal as it was, and even to love it, as part of the price I had paid for the redemption of my children. Sometimes I thought God was a compassionate Father, who would forgive my sins for the sake of my sufferings. At other times, it seemed to me there was no justice or mercy in the divine government. I asked why the curse of slavery was permitted to exist, and why I had been so persecuted and wronged from youth upward. These things took the shape of mystery, which is to this day not so clear to my soul as I trust it will be hereafter.

In the midst of my illness, grandmother broke down under the weight of anxiety and toil. The idea of losing her, who had always been my best friend and a mother to my children, was the sorest trial I had yet had. O, how earnestly I prayed

that she might recover!
How hard it seemed,
that I could not tend
upon her, who had so
long and so tenderly
watched over me!

One day the screams of
a child nerved me with
strength to crawl to my
peeping-hole, and I saw
my son covered with
blood. A fierce dog,
usually kept chained,
had seized and bitten
him. A doctor was sent
for, and I heard the
groans and screams of
my child while the
wounds were being
sewed up. O, what
torture to a mother's
heart, to listen to this
and be unable to go to
him!

But childhood is like a
day in spring,
alternately

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shower and sunshine.
Before night Benny was
bright and lively,
threatening the
destruction of the dog;
and great was his
delight when the
doctor told him the
next day that the dog
had bitten another boy
and been shot. Benny
recovered from his

wounds; but it was long before he could walk.

When my grandmother's illness became known, many ladies, who were her customers, called to bring her some little comforts, and to inquire whether she had every thing she wanted. Aunt Nancy one night asked permission to watch with her sick mother, and Mrs. Flint replied, "I don't see any need of your going. I can't spare you." But when she found other ladies in the neighborhood were so attentive, not wishing to be outdone in Christian charity, she also sallied forth, in magnificent condescension, and stood by the bedside of her who had loved her in her infancy, and who had been repaid by such grievous wrongs. She seemed surprised to find her so ill, and scolded uncle Phillip for not sending for Dr. Flint. She herself sent for him immediately, and he came. Secure as I was in my retreat, I should have been terrified if I had known he was so near me. He pronounced my grandmother in a very

critical situation, and said if her attending physician wished it, he would visit her. Nobody wished to have him coming to the house at all hours, and we were not disposed to give him a chance to make out a long bill.

As Mrs. Flint went out, Sally told her the reason Benny was lame was, that a dog had bitten him. "I'm glad of it," replied she. "I wish he had killed him. It would be good news to send to his mother. Her day will come.

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The dogs will grab her yet." With these Christian words she and her husband departed, and, to my great satisfaction, returned no more.

I heard from uncle Phillip, with feelings of unspeakable joy and gratitude, that the crisis was passed and grandmother would live. I could now say from my heart, "God is merciful. He has spared me the anguish of feeling that I caused her death."

XXIV. THE CANDIDATE FOR CONGRESS.

The summer had nearly ended, when Dr. Flint made a third visit to New York, in search of me. Two candidates were running for Congress, and he returned in season to vote. The father of my children was the Whig candidate. The doctor had hitherto been a staunch Whig; but now he exerted all his energies for the defeat of Mr. Sands. He invited large parties of men to dine in the shade of his trees, and supplied them with plenty of rum and brandy. If any poor fellow drowned his wits in the bowl, and, in the openness of his convivial heart, proclaimed that he did not mean to vote the Democratic ticket, he was shoved into the street without ceremony.

The doctor expended his liquor in vain. Mr. Sands was elected; an event which occasioned

me some anxious thoughts. He had not emancipated my children, and if he should die they would be at the mercy of his heirs. Two little voices, that frequently met my ear, seemed to plead with me not to let their father depart without striving to make their freedom secure. Years had passed since I had spoken to him. I had not even seen him since the night I passed him, unrecognized, in my disguise of a sailor. I supposed he would call before he left, to say something to my grandmother concerning the children, and I resolved what course to take.

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The day before his departure for Washington I made arrangements, towards evening, to get from my hiding-place into the storeroom below. I found myself so stiff and clumsy that it was with great difficulty I could hitch from one resting place to another. When I reached the storeroom my ankles gave way under me, and I sank exhausted on the floor.

It seemed as if I could never use my limbs again. But the purpose I had in view roused all the strength I had. I crawled on my hands and knees to the window, and, screened behind a barrel, I waited for his coming. The clock struck nine, and I knew the steamboat would leave between ten and eleven. My hopes were failing. But presently I heard his voice, saying to some one, "Wait for me a moment. I wish to see aunt Martha." When he came out, as he passed the window, I said, "Stop one moment, and let me speak for my children." He started, hesitated, and then passed on, and went out of the gate. I closed the shutter I had partially opened, and sank down behind the barrel. I had suffered much; but seldom had I experienced a keener pang than I then felt. Had my children, then, become of so little consequence to him? And had he so little feeling for their wretched mother that he would not listen a moment while she pleaded for them?

Painful memories were
so busy within me, that
I forgot I had not
hooked the shutter, till I
heard some one
opening it. I looked up.
He had come back.
"Who called me?" said
he, in a low tone. "I
did," I replied. "Oh,
Linda," said he, "I knew
your voice; but I was
afraid to answer, lest
my friend should hear
me. Why do you come
here? Is it possible

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you risk yourself in this
house? They are mad to
allow it. I shall expect
to hear that you are all
ruined." I did not wish
to implicate him, by
letting him know my
place of concealment;
so I merely said, "I
thought you would
come to bid
grandmother good by,
and so I came here to
speak a few words to
you about
emancipating my
children. Many changes
may take place during
the six months you are
gone to Washington,
and it does not seem
right for you to expose
them to the risk of such
changes. I want nothing
for myself; all I ask is,

that you will free my children, or authorize some friend to do it, before you go."

He promised he would do it, and also expressed a readiness to make any arrangements whereby I could be purchased.

I heard footsteps approaching, and closed the shutter hastily. I wanted to crawl back to my den, without letting the family know what I had done; for I knew they would deem it very imprudent. But he stepped back into the house, to tell my grandmother that he had spoken with me at the storeroom window, and to beg of her not to allow me to remain in the house over night. He said it was the height of madness for me to be there; that we should certainly all be ruined. Luckily, he was in too much of a hurry to wait for a reply, or the dear old woman would surely have told him all.

I tried to go back to my den, but found it more difficult to go up than I had to come down. Now that my mission

was fulfilled, the little
strength that had
supported me through
it was gone, and I sank
helpless

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on the floor. My
grandmother, alarmed
at the risk I had run,
came into the
storeroom in the dark,
and locked the door
behind her. "Linda," she
whispered, "where are
you?"

"I am here by the
window," I replied. "I
couldn't have him go
away without
emancipating the
children. Who knows
what may happen?"

"Come, come, child,"
said she, "it won't do
for you to stay here
another minute. You've
done wrong; but I can't
blame you, poor thing!"

I told her I could not
return without
assistance, and she
must call my uncle.
Uncle Phillip came, and
pity prevented him
from scolding me. He
carried me back to my
dungeon, laid me
tenderly on the bed,
gave me some
medicine, and asked

me if there was any
thing more he could do.
Then he went away,
and I was left with my
own thoughts--starless
as the midnight
darkness around me.

My friends feared I
should become a
cripple for life; and I
was so weary of my
long imprisonment
that, had it not been for
the hope of serving my
children, I should have
been thankful to die;
but, for their sakes, I
was willing to bear on.

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XXV.
COMPETITION IN
CUNNING.

Dr. Flint had not given
me up. Every now and
then he would say to
my grandmother that I
would yet come back,
and voluntarily
surrender myself; and
that when I did, I could
be purchased by my
relatives, or any one
who wished to buy me.
I knew his cunning
nature too well not to
perceive that this was a
trap laid for me; and so
all my friends

understood it. I resolved to match my cunning against his cunning. In order to make him believe that I was in New York, I resolved to write him a letter dated from that place. I sent for my friend Peter, and asked him if he knew any trustworthy seafaring person, who would carry such a letter to New York, and put it in the post office there. He said he knew one that he would trust with his own life to the ends of the world. I reminded him that it was a hazardous thing for him to undertake. He said he knew it, but he was willing to do any thing to help me. I expressed a wish for a New York paper, to ascertain the names of some of the streets. He run his hand into his pocket, and said, "Here is half a one, that was round a cap I bought of a pedler yesterday." I told him the letter would be ready the next evening. He bade me good by, adding, "Keep up your spirits, Linda; brighter days will come by and by."

My uncle Phillip kept
watch over the gate
until

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our brief interview was
over. Early the next
morning, I seated
myself near the little
aperture to examine
the newspaper. It was a
piece of the New York
Herald; and, for once,
the paper that
systematically abuses
the colored people, was
made to render them a
service. Having
obtained what
information I wanted
concerning streets and
numbers, I wrote two
letters, one to my
grandmother, the other
to Dr. Flint. I reminded
him how he, a
gray-headed man, had
treated a helpless child,
who had been placed in
his power, and what
years of misery he had
brought upon her. To
my grandmother, I
expressed a wish to
have my children sent
to me at the north,
where I could teach
them to respect
themselves, and set
them a virtuous
example; which a slave
mother was not
allowed to do at the
south. I asked her to
direct her answer to a

certain street in Boston, as I did not live in New York, though I went there sometimes. I dated these letters ahead, to allow for the time it would take to carry them, and sent a memorandum of the date to the messenger. When my friend came for the letters, I said, "God bless and reward you, Peter, for this disinterested kindness. Pray be careful. If you are detected, both you and I will have to suffer dreadfully. I have not a relative who would dare to do it for me." He replied, "You may trust to me, Linda. I don't forget that your father was my best friend, and I will be a friend to his children so long as God lets me live."

It was necessary to tell my grandmother what I had done, in order that she might be ready for the letter, and prepared to hear what Dr. Flint might say about my being at the north. She was sadly troubled.

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She felt sure mischief would come of it. I also told my plan to aunt Nancy, in order that she

might report to us what was said at Dr. Flint's house. I whispered it to her through a crack, and she whispered back, "I hope it will succeed. I shan't mind being a slave all my life, if I can only see you and the children free."

I had directed that my letters should be put into the New York post office on the 20th of the month. On the evening of the 24th my aunt came to say that Dr. Flint and his wife had been talking in a low voice about a letter he had received, and that when he went to his office he promised to bring it when he came to tea. So I concluded I should hear my letter read the next morning. I told my grandmother Dr. Flint would be sure to come, and asked her to have him sit near a certain door, and leave it open, that I might hear what he said. The next morning I took my station within sound of that door, and remained motionless as a statue. It was not long before I heard the gate slam, and the well-known footsteps enter the house. He seated himself in the

chair that was placed
for him, and said, "Well,
Martha, I've brought
you a letter from Linda.
She has sent me a
letter, also. I know
exactly where to find
her; but I don't choose
to go to Boston for her.
I had rather she would
come back of her own
accord, in a respectable
manner. Her uncle
Phillip is the best
person to go for her.
With him, she would
feel perfectly free to
act. I am willing to pay
his expenses going and
returning. She shall be
sold to her friends. Her
children are free; at
least I suppose they
are; and

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when you obtain her
freedom, you'll make a
happy family. I
suppose, Martha, you
have no objection to my
reading to you the
letter Linda has written
to you."

He broke the seal, and I
heard him read it. The
old villain! He had
suppressed the letter I
wrote to grandmother,
and prepared a
substitute of his own,
the purport of which

was as follows:--

"Dear Grandmother:

I have long wanted to write to you; but the disgraceful manner in which I left you and my children made me ashamed to do it. If you knew how much I have suffered since I ran away, you would pity and forgive me. I have purchased freedom at a dear rate. If any arrangement could be made for me to return to the south without being a slave, I would gladly come. If not, I beg of you to send my children to the north. I cannot live any longer without them. Let me know in time, and I will meet them in New York or Philadelphia, whichever place best suits my uncle's convenience. Write as soon as possible to your unhappy daughter, Linda."

"It is very much as I expected it would be," said the old hypocrite, rising to go. "You see the foolish girl has repented of her rashness, and wants to return. We must help her to do it, Martha. Talk with Phillip about it. If he will go for her,

she will trust to him,
and come back. I
should like an answer
tomorrow. Good
morning, Martha."

As he stepped out on
the piazza, he stumbled
over

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my little girl. "Ah, Ellen,
is that you?" he said, in
his most gracious
manner. "I didn't see
you. How do you do?"
"Pretty well, sir," she
replied. "I heard you
tell grandmother that
my mother is coming
home. I want to see
her."

"Yes, Ellen, I am going
to bring her home very
soon," rejoined he; "and
you shall see her as
much as you like, you
little curly-headed
nigger."

This was as good as a
comedy to me, who had
heard it all; but
grandmother was
frightened and
distressed, because the
doctor wanted my
uncle to go for me.

The next evening Dr.
Flint called to talk the
matter over. My uncle
told him that from

what he had heard of Massachusetts, he judged he should be mobbed if he went there after a runaway slave. "All stuff and nonsense, Phillip!" replied the doctor. "Do you suppose I want you to kick up a row in Boston? The business can all be done quietly. Linda writes that she wants to come back. You are her relative, and she would trust you. The case would be different if I went. She might object to coming with me; and the damned abolitionists, if they knew I was her master, would not believe me, if I told them she had begged to go back. They would get up a row; and I should not like to see Linda dragged through the streets like to see Linda dragged through the streets like a common negro. She has been very ungrateful to me for all my kindness; but I forgive her, and want to act the part of a friend towards her. I have no wish to hold her as my slave. Her friends can buy her as soon as she arrives here."

Finding that his arguments failed to convince my uncle, the doctor "let the cat out of the bag," by saying that he had written to the mayor of Boston, to ascertain whether there was a person of my description at the street and number from which my letter was dated. He had omitted this date in the letter he had made up to read to my grandmother. If I had dated from New York, the old man would probably have made another journey to that city. But even in that dark region, where knowledge is so carefully excluded from the slave, I had heard enough about Massachusetts to come to the conclusion that slaveholders did not consider it a comfortable place to go to in search of a runaway. That was before the Fugitive Slave Law was passed; before Massachusetts had consented to become a "nigger hunter" for the south.

My grandmother, who had become skittish by seeing her family always in danger, came to me with a very distressed countenance, and said, "What will you do if the mayor of Boston sends him word that you haven't been there? Then he will suspect the letter was a trick; and maybe he'll find out something about it, and we shall all get into trouble. O Linda, I wish you had never sent the letters."

"Don't worry yourself, grandmother," said I. "The mayor of Boston won't trouble himself to hunt niggers for Dr. Flint. The letters will do good in the end. I shall get out of this dark hole some time or other."

"I hope you will, child," replied the good, patient old friend. "You have been here a long time; almost five years; but whenever you do go, it will break your

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old grandmother's heart. I should be expecting every day to

hear that you were brought back in irons and put in jail God help you, poor child! Let us be thankful that some time or other we shall go "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." My heart responded, Amen.

The fact that Dr. Flint had written to the mayor of Boston convinced me that he believed my letter to be genuine, and of course that he had no suspicion of my being any where in the vicinity. It was a great object to keep up this delusion, for it made me and my friends feel less anxious, and it would be very convenient whenever there was a chance to escape. I resolved, therefore, to continue to write letters from the north from time to time.

Two or three weeks passed, and as no news came from the mayor of Boston, grandmother began to listen to my entreaty to be allowed to leave my cell, sometimes, and exercise my limbs to prevent my becoming a cripple. I was allowed

to slip down into the small storeroom, early in the morning, and remain there a little while. The room was all filled up with barrels, except a small open space under my trap-door. This faced the door, the upper part of which was of glass, and purposely left uncurtained, that the curious might look in. The air of this place was close; but it was so much better than the atmosphere of my cell, that I dreaded to return. I came down as soon as it was light, and remained till eight o'clock, when people began to be about, and there was danger that some one might come on the piazza. I had tried various

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applications to bring warmth and feeling into my limbs, but without avail. They were so numb and stiff that it was a painful effort to move; and had my enemies come upon me during the first mornings I tried to exercise them a little in the small unoccupied space of the storeroom,

it would have been
impossible for me to
have escaped.

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XXVI.
IMPORTANT ERA IN
MY BROTHER'S LIFE.

I MISSED the company
and kind attentions of
my brother William,
who had gone to
Washington with his
master, Mr. Sands. We
received several letters
from him, written
without any allusion to
me, but expressed in
such a manner that I
knew he did not forget
me. I disguised my
hand, and wrote to him
in the same manner. It
was a long session; and
when it closed, William
wrote to inform us that
Mr. Sands was going to
the north, to be gone
some time, and that he
was to accompany him.
I knew that his master
had promised to give
him his freedom, but
no time had been
specified. Would
William trust to a
slave's chances? I
remembered how we
used to talk together, in
our young days, about

obtaining our freedom,
and I thought it very
doubtful whether he
would come back to us.

Grandmother received
a letter from Mr. Sands,
saying that William had
proved a most faithful
servant, and he would
also say a valued
friend; that no mother
had ever trained a
better boy. He said he
had traveled through
the Northern States
and Canada; and
though the
abolitionists had tried
to decoy him away, they
had never succeeded.
He ended by saying
they should be at home
shortly.

We expected letters
from William,
describing the
novelties of his journey,
but none came. In time,
it was reported that Mr.
Sands would return
late in the

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autumn, accompanied
by a bride. Still no
letters from William. I
felt almost sure I
should never see him
again on southern soil;
but had he no word of
comfort to send to his
friends at home? to the
poor captive in her
dungeon? My thoughts

wandered through the dark past, and over the uncertain future. Alone in my cell, where no eye but God's could see me, I wept bitter tears. How earnestly I prayed to him to restore me to my children, and enable me to be a useful woman and a good mother!

At last the day arrived for the return of the travellers. Grandmother had made loving preparations to welcome her absent boy back to the old hearthstone. When the dinner table was laid, William's plate occupied its old place. The stage coach went by empty. My grandmother waited dinner. She thought perhaps he was necessarily detained by his master. In my prison I listened anxiously, expecting every moment to hear my dear brother's voice and step. In the course of the afternoon a lad was sent by Mr. Sands to tell grandmother that William did not return with him; that the abolitionists had decoyed him away. But he begged her not to feel troubled about it,

for he felt confident she would see William in a few days. As soon as he had time to reflect he would come back, for he could never expect to be so well off at the north as he had been with him.

If you had seen the tears, and heard the sobs, you would have thought the messenger had brought tidings of death instead of freedom. Poor old grandmother felt that she should never see her darling boy again. And I was selfish. I thought more of what I had lost,

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than of what my brother had gained. A new anxiety began to trouble me. Mr. Sands had expended a good deal of money, and would naturally feel irritated by the loss he had incurred. I greatly feared this might injure the prospects of my children, who were now becoming valuable property. I longed to have their emancipation made certain. The more so, because their master

and father was now married. I was too familiar with slavery not to know that promises made to slaves, though with kind intentions, and sincere at the time, depend upon many contingencies for their fulfilment.

Much as I wished William to be free, the step he had taken made me sad and anxious. The following Sabbath was calm and clear; so beautiful that it seemed like a Sabbath in the eternal world. My grandmother brought the children out on the piazza, that I might hear their voices. She thought it would comfort me in my despondency; and it did. They chatted merrily, as only children can. Benny said, "Grandmother, do you think uncle Will has gone for good? Won't he ever come back again? May be he'll find mother. If he does, won't she be glad to see him! Why don't you and uncle Phillip, and all of us, go and live where mother is? I should like it; wouldn't you, Ellen?"

"Yes, I should like it,"
replied Ellen; "but how
could we find her? Do
you know the place,
grandmother? I don't
remember how mother
looked--do you,
Benny?"

Benny was just
beginning to describe
me when they were
interrupted by an old
slave woman, a near
neighbor,

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named Aggie. This poor
creature had witnessed
the sale of her children,
and seen them carried
off to parts unknown,
without any hopes of
ever hearing from them
again. She saw that my
grandmother had been
weeping, and she said,
in a sympathizing tone,
"What's the matter,
aunt Marthy?"

"O Aggie," she replied,
"it seems as if I
shouldn't have any of
my children or
grandchildren left to
hand me a drink when
I'm dying, and lay my
old body in the ground.
My boy didn't come
back with Mr. Sands. He
staid at the north."

Poor old Aggie clapped her hands for joy. "Is dat what you's crying fur?" she exclaimed. "Git down on your knees and bress de Lord! I don't know whar my poor children is, and I nebber 'spect to know. You don't know whar poor Linda's gone to; but you do know whar her brudder is. He's in free parts; and dat's de right place. Don't murmur at de Lord's doings, but git down on your knees and tank him for his goodness."

My selfishness was rebuked by what poor Aggie said. She rejoiced over the escape of one who was merely her fellow-bondman, while his own sister was only thinking what his good fortune might cost her children. I knelt and prayed God to forgive me; and I thanked him from my heart, that one of my family was saved from the grasp of slavery.

It was not long before we received a letter from William. He wrote that Mr. Sands had always treated him kindly, and that he had tried to do his duty to him faithfully. But ever

since he was a boy, he
had longed to be free;
and he had already
gone through

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enough to convince
him he had better not
lose the chance that
offered. He concluded
by saying, "Don't worry
about me, dear
grandmother. I shall
think of you always;
and it will spur me on
to work hard and try to
do right. When I have
earned money enough
to give you a home,
perhaps you will come
to the north, and we
can all live happy
together."

Mr. Sands told my uncle
Phillip the particulars
about William's leaving
him. He said, "I trusted
him as if he were my
own brother, and
treated him as kindly.
The abolitionists talked
to him in several
places; but I had no
idea they could tempt
him. However, I don't
blame William. He's
young and
inconsiderate, and
those Northern rascals
decoyed him. I must
confess the scamp was
very bold about it. I
met him coming down

the steps of the Astor House with his trunk on his shoulder, and I asked him where he was going. He said he was going to change his old trunk. I told him it was rather shabby, and asked if he didn't need some money. He said, No, thanked me, and went off. He did not return so soon as I expected; but I waited patiently. At last I went to see if our trunks were packed, ready for our journey. I found them locked, and a sealed note on the table informed me where I could find the keys. The fellow even tried to be religious. He wrote that he hoped God would always bless me, and reward me for my kindness; that he was not unwilling to serve me; but he wanted to be a free man; and that if I thought he did wrong, he hoped I would forgive him. I intended to give him his freedom in five years. He might have trusted me. He has shown himself ungrateful; but I

shall not go for him, or send for him. I feel confident that he will soon return to me."

I afterwards heard an account of the affair from William himself. He had not been urged away by abolitionists. He needed no information they could give him about slavery to stimulate his desire for freedom. He looked at his hands, and remembered that they were once in irons. What security had he that they would not be so again? Mr. Sands was kind to him; but he might indefinitely postpone the promise he had made to give him his freedom. He might come under pecuniary embarrassments, and his property be seized by creditors; or he might die, without making any arrangements in his favor. He had too often known such accidents to happen to slaves who had kind masters, and he wisely resolved to make sure of the present opportunity to own himself. He was scrupulous about taking any money from his master on false pretences; so he sold

his best clothes to pay
for his passage to
Boston. The
slaveholders
pronounced him a
base, ungrateful
wretch, for thus
requiting his master's
indulgence. What
would they have done
under similar
circumstances?

When Dr. Flint's family
heard that William had
deserted Mr. Sands,
they chuckled greatly
over the news. Mrs.
Flint made her usual
manifestations of
Christian feeling, by
saying, "I'm glad of it. I
hope he'll never get
him again. I like to see
people paid back in
their own coin. I reckon
Linda's children will
have to pay for it. I
should be glad to see
them in the
speculator's hands
again, for I'm tired of
seeing those little
niggers march about
the streets."

XXVII.

NEW DESTINATION FOR THE CHILDREN.

Mrs. Flint proclaimed her intention of informing Mrs. Sands who was the father of my children. She likewise proposed to tell her what an artful devil I was; that I had made a great deal of trouble in her family; that when Mr. Sands was at the north, she didn't doubt I had followed him in disguise, and persuaded William to run away. She had some reason to entertain such an idea; for I had written from the north, from time to time, and I dated my letters from various places. Many of them fell into Dr. Flint's hands, as I expected they would; and he must have come to the conclusion that I travelled about a good deal. He kept a close watch over my children, thinking they would eventually lead to my detection.

A new and unexpected trial was in store for me. One day, when Mr. Sands and his wife were walking in the

street, they met Benny.
The lady took a fancy to
him, and exclaimed,
"What a pretty little
negro! Whom does he
belong to?"

Benny did not hear the
answer; but he came
home very indignant
with the stranger lady,
because she had called
him a negro. A few days
afterwards, Mr. Sands
called on my
grandmother, and told
her he wanted her to
take the children to his
house. He said he had
informed his wife of his
relation to them, and
told her they were
motherless; and she
wanted to see them.

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When he had gone, my
grandmother came and
asked what I would do.
The question seemed a
mockery. What could I
do? They were Mr.
Sands's slaves, and
their mother was a
slave, whom he had
represented to be dead.
Perhaps he thought I
was. I was too much
pained and puzzled to
come to any decision;
and the children were
carried without my
knowledge.

Mrs. Sands had a sister
from Illinois staying

with her. This lady, who had no children of her own, was so much pleased with Ellen, that she offered to adopt her, and bring her up as she would a daughter. Mrs. Sands wanted to take Benjamin. When grandmother reported this to me, I was tried almost beyond endurance. Was this all I was to gain by what I had suffered for the sake of having my children free? True, the prospect seemed fair; but I knew too well how lightly slaveholders held such "parental relations." If pecuniary troubles should come, or if the new wife required more money than could conveniently be spared, my children might be thought of as a convenient means of raising funds. I had no trust in thee, O Slavery! Never should I know peace till my children were emancipated with all due formalities of law.

I was too proud to ask Mr. Sands to do any thing for my own benefit; but I could bring myself to become a supplicant for my children. I resolved to

remind him of the promise he had made me, and to throw myself upon his honor for the performance of it. I persuaded my grandmother to go to him, and tell him I was not dead, and that I earnestly entreated him to keep the promise he had made me; that I had heard of the

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recent proposals concerning my children, and did not feel easy to accept them; that he had promised to emancipate them, and it was time for him to redeem his pledge. I knew there was some risk in thus betraying that I was in the vicinity; but what will not a mother do for her children? He received the message with surprise, and said, "The children are free. I have never intended to claim them as slaves. Linda may decide their fate. In my opinion, they had better be sent to the north. I don't think they are quite safe here. Dr. Flint boasts that they are still in his power.

He says they were his daughter's property, and as she was not of age when they were sold, the contract is not legally binding."

So, then, after all I had endured for their sakes, my poor children were between two fires; between my old master and their new master! And I was powerless.

There was no protecting arm of the law for me to invoke. Mr. Sands proposed that Ellen should go, for the present, to some of his relatives, who had removed to Brooklyn, Long Island. It was promised that she should be well taken care of, and sent to school. I consented to it, as the best arrangement I could make for her. My grandmother, of course, negotiated it all; and Mrs. Sands knew of no other person in the transaction. She proposed that they should take Ellen with them to Washington, and keep her till they had a good chance of sending her, with friends, to Brooklyn. She had an infant daughter. I had had a glimpse of it, as the nurse passed with it in

her arms. It was not a pleasant thought to me, that the bondwoman's child should tend her free-born sister; but there was no alternative.

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Ellen was made ready for the journey. O, how it tried my heart to send her away, so young, alone, among strangers! Without a mother's love to shelter her from the storms of life; almost without memory of a mother! I doubted whether she and Benny would have for me the natural affection that children feel for a parent. I thought to myself that I might perhaps never see my daughter again, and I had a great desire that she should look upon me, before she went, that she might take my image with her in her memory. It seemed to me cruel to have her brought to my dungeon. It was sorrow enough for her young heart to know that her mother was a victim of slavery, without seeing the wretched hiding-place to which it had driven her. I

begged permission to
pass the last night in
one of the open
chambers, with my
little girl. They thought
I was crazy to think of
trusting such a young
child with my perilous
secret. I told them I had
watched her character,
and I felt sure she
would not betray me;
that i was determined
to have an interview,
and if they would not
facilitate it, I would
take my own way to
obtain it. They
remonstrated against
the rashness of such a
proceeding; but finding
they could not change
my purpose, they
yielded. I slipped
through the trap-door
into the storeroom, and
my uncle kept watch at
the gate, while I passed
into the piazza and
went up stairs, to the
room I used to occupy.
It was more than five
years since I had seen
it; and how the
memories crowded on
me! There I had taken
shelter when my
mistress drove me from
her house; there came
my old tyrant, to mock,
insult, and curse me;
there my children were
first laid in my arms;

there I had watched
over them, each day
with a deeper and
sadder love; there I had
knelt to God, in anguish
of heart, to forgive the
wrong I had done. How
vividly it all came back!
And after this long,
gloomy interval, I stood
there such a wreck!

In the midst of these
meditations, I heard
footsteps on the stairs.
The door opened, and
my uncle Phillip came
in, leading Ellen by the
hand. I put my arms
round her, and said,
"Ellen, my dear child, I
am your mother." She
drew back a little, and
looked at me; then,
with sweet confidence,
she laid her cheek
against mine, and I
folded her to the heart
that had been so long
desolated. She was the
first to speak. Raising
her head, she said,
inquiringly, "You really
are my mother?" I told
her I really was; that
during all the long time
she had not seen me, I
had loved her most
tenderly; and that now
she was going away, I
wanted to see her and
talk with her, that she
might remember me.
With a sob in her voice,
she said, "I'm glad

you've come to see me;
but why didn't you ever
come before? Benny
and I have wanted so
much to see you! He
remembers you, and
sometimes he tells me
about you. Why didn't
you come home when
Dr. Flint went to bring
you?"

I answered, "I couldn't
come before, dear. But
now that I am with you,
tell me whether you
like to go away." "I don't
know," said she, crying.
"Grandmother says I
ought not to cry; that I
am going to a good
place, where I can learn
to read and write, and
that by and by I can
write her a letter. But I
shan't have Benny, or
grandmother, or uncle
Phillip, or any body to
love me. Can't you go
with me? O, do go, dear
mother!"

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I told her I couldn't go
now; but sometime I
would come to her, and
then she and Benny
and I would live
together, and have
happy times. She
wanted to run and
bring Benny to see me
now. I told her he was

going to the north,
before long, with uncle
Phillip, and then I
would come to see him
before he went away. I
asked if she would like
to have me stay all
night and sleep with
her. "O, yes," she
replied. Then, turning
to her uncle, she said,
pleadingly, " May I stay?
Please, uncle! She is my
own mother." He laid
his hand on her head,
and said, solemnly,
"Ellen, this is the secret
you have promised
grandmother never to
tell. If you ever speak of
it to any body, they will
never let you see your
grandmother again,
and your mother can
never come to
Brooklyn." "Uncle," she
replied, "I will never
tell." He told her she
might stay with me;
and when he had gone,
I took her in my arms
and told her I was a
slave, and that was the
reason she must never
say she had seen me. I
exhorted her to be a
good child, to try to
please the people
where she was going,
and that God would
raise her up friends. I
told her to say her
prayers, and remember
always to pray for her
poor mother, and that

God would permit us to meet again. She wept, and I did not check her tears. Perhaps she would never again have a chance to pour her tears into a mother's bosom. All night she nestled in my arms, and I had no inclination to slumber. The moments were too precious to lose any of them. Once, when I thought she was asleep, I kissed her forehead softly, and she said, "I am not asleep, dear mother."

Before dawn they came to take me back to my den.

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I drew aside the window curtain, to take a last look of my child. The moonlight shone on her face, and I bent over her, as I had done years before, that wretched night when I ran away. I hugged her close to my throbbing heart; and tears, too sad for such young eyes to shed, flowed down her cheeks, as she gave her last kiss, and whispered in my ear, "Mother, I will never tell." And she never did.

When I got back to my den, I threw myself on the bed and wept there alone in the darkness. It seemed as if my heart would burst. When the time for Ellen's departure drew nigh, I could hear neighbors and friends saying to her, "Good by, Ellen. I hope your poor mother will find you out. Won't you be glad to see her!" She replied, "Yes, ma'am;" and they little dreamed of the weighty secret that weighed down her young heart. She was an affectionate child, but naturally very reserved, except with those she loved, and I felt secure that my secret would be safe with her. I heard the gate close after her, with such feelings as only a slave mother can experience. During the day my meditations were very sad. Sometimes I feared I had been very selfish not to give up all claim to her, and let her go to Illinois, to be adopted by Mrs. Sands's sister. It was my experience of slavery that decided me against it. I feared that circumstances might arise that would cause her to be sent back. I

felt confident that I should go to New York myself; and then I should be able to watch over her, and in some degree protect her.

Dr. Flint's family knew nothing of the proposed arrangement till after Ellen was gone, and the news

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displeased them greatly. Mrs. Flint called on Mrs. Sands's sister to inquire into the matter. She expressed her opinion very freely as to the respect Mr. Sands showed for his wife, and for his own character, in acknowledging those "young niggers." And as for sending Ellen away, she pronounced it to be just as much stealing as it would be for him to come and take a piece of furniture out of her parlor. She said her daughter was not of age to sign the bill of sale, and the children were her property; and when she became of age, or was married, she could take them, wherever she could lay hands on them.

Miss Emily Flint, the little girl to whom I had been bequeathed, was now in her sixteenth year. Her mother considered it all right and honorable for her, or her future husband, to steal my children; but she did not understand how any body could hold up their heads in respectable society, after they had purchased their own children, as Mr. Sands had done. Dr. Flint said very little. Perhaps he thought that Benny would be less likely to be sent away if he kept quiet. One of my letters, that fell into his hands, was dated from Canada; and he seldom spoke of me now. This state of things enabled me to slip down into the storeroom more frequently, where I could stand upright, and move my limbs more freely.

Days, weeks, and months passed, and there came no news of Ellen. I sent a letter to Brooklyn, written in my grandmother's name, to inquire whether she had arrived there. Answer was returned that she had not. I

wrote to her in
Washington; but no
notice was taken of it.
There was one person
there, who ought to
have

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had some sympathy
with the anxiety of the
child's friends at home;
but the links of such
relations as he had
formed with me, are
easily broken and cast
away as rubbish. Yet
how protectingly and
persuasively he once
talked to the poor,
helpless slave girl! And
how entirely I trusted
him! But now
suspicious darkened
my mind. Was my child
dead, or had they
deceived me, and sold
her?

If the secret memoirs of
many members of
Congress should be
published, curious
details would be
unfolded. I once saw a
letter from a member
of Congress to a slave,
who was the mother of
six of his children. He
wrote to request that
she would send her
children away from the
great house before his
return, as he expected
to be accompanied by

friends. The woman could not read, and was obliged to employ another to read the letter. The existence of the colored children did not trouble this gentleman, it was only the fear that friends might recognize in their features a resemblance to him.

At the end of six months, a letter came to my grandmother, from Brooklyn. It was written by a young lady in the family, and announced that Ellen had just arrived. It contained the following message from her: "I do try to do just as you told me to, and I pray for you every night and morning." I understood that these words were meant for me; and they were a balsam to my heart. The writer closed her letter by saying, "Ellen is a nice little girl, and we shall like to have her with us. My cousin, Mr. Sands, has given her to me, to be my little waiting maid. I shall send her to school, and I hope some day she will write to

you herself." This letter perplexed and troubled me. Had my child's father merely placed her there till she was old enough to support herself? Or had he given her to his cousin, as a piece of property? If the last idea was correct, his cousin might return to the south at any time, and hold Ellen as a slave. I tried to put away from me the painful thought that such a foul wrong could have been done to us. I said to myself, "Surely there must be some justice in man;" then I remembered, with a sigh, how slavery perverted all the natural feelings of the human heart. It gave me a pang to look on my light-hearted boy. He believed himself free; and to have him brought under the yoke of slavery, would be more than I could bear. How I longed to have him safely out of the reach of its power!

XXVIII.

AUNT NANCY.

I HAVE mentioned my great-aunt, who was a slave in Dr. Flint's family, and who had been my refuge during the shameful persecutions I suffered from him. This aunt had been married at twenty years of age; that is, as far as slaves can marry. She had the consent of her master and mistress, and a clergyman performed the ceremony. But it was a mere form, without any legal value. Her master or mistress could annul it any day they pleased. She had always slept on the floor in the entry, near Mrs. Flint's chamber door, that she might be within call. When she was married, she was told she might have the use of a small room in an outhouse. Her mother and her husband furnished it. He was a seafaring man, and was allowed to sleep there when he was at home. But on the wedding evening, the bride was ordered to her old post on the entry floor.

Mrs. Flint, at that time, had no children; but she was expecting to be a mother, and if she should want a drink of water in the night, what could she do without her slave to bring it? So my aunt was compelled to lie at her door, until one midnight she was forced to leave, to give premature birth to a child. In a fortnight she was required to resume her place on the entry floor, because Mrs. Flint's babe needed her attentions. She kept her station there through summer and winter, until she had given premature birth to six children;

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and all the while she was employed as night-nurse to Mrs. Flint's children. Finally, toiling all day, and being deprived of rest at night, completely broke down her constitution, and Dr. Flint declared it was impossible she could ever become the mother of a living child. The fear of losing so valuable a servant by death, now induced them to allow her to sleep in her little room

in the out-house,
except when there was
sickness in the family.
She afterwards had two
feeble babes, one of
whom died in a few
days, and the other in
four weeks. I well
remember her patient
sorrow as she held the
last dead baby in her
arms. "I wish it could
have lived," she said; "it
is not the will of God
that any of my children
should live. But I will
try to be fit to meet
their little spirits in
heaven."

Aunt Nancy was
housekeeper and
waiting-maid in Dr.
Flint's family. Indeed,
she was the factotum of
the household. Nothing
went on well without
her. She was my
mother's twin sister,
and, as far as was in
her power, she
supplied a mother's
place to us orphans. I
slept with her all the
time I lived in my old
master's house, and the
bond between us was
very strong. When my
friends tried to
discourage me from
running away, she
always encouraged me.
When they thought I
had better return and
ask my master's
pardon, because there

was no possibility of
escape, she sent me
word never to yield.
She said if I persevered
I might, perhaps, gain
the freedom of my
children; and even if I
perished in doing it,
that was better than to
leave them to groan
under the same
persecutions that had
blighted my own life.
After I was shut up in
my dark cell, she stole
away, whenever she
could, to

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bring me the news and
say something
cheering. How often
did I kneel down to
listen to her words of
consolation, whispered
through a crack! "I am
old, and have not long
to live," she used to say;
"and I could die happy
if I could only see you
and the children free.
You must pray to God,
Linda, as I do for you,
that he will lead you
out of this darkness." I
would beg her not to
worry herself on my
account; that there was
an end of all suffering
sooner or later, and
that whether I lived in
chains or in freedom, I
should always

remember her as the good friend who had been the comfort of my life. A word from her always strengthened me; and not me only. The whole family relied upon her judgment, and were guided by her advice.

I had been in my cell six years when my grand-mother was summoned to the bedside of this, her last remaining daughter. She was very ill, and they said she would die. Grandmother had not entered Dr. Flint's house for several years. They had treated her cruelly, but she thought nothing of that now. She was grateful for permission to watch by the death-bed of her child. They had always been devoted to each other; and now they sat looking into each other's eyes, longing to speak of the secret that had weighed so much on the hearts of both. My aunt had been stricken with paralysis. She lived but two days, and the last day she was speechless. Before she lost the power of utterance, she told her mother not to grieve if she could not speak to her; that she would try

to hold up her hand, to
let her know that all
was well with her. Even
the hard-hearted
doctor was a little
softened when he saw
the dying woman try to
smile on the aged

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mother, who was
kneeling by her side.
His eyes moistened for
a moment, as he said
she had always been a
faithful servant, and
they should never be
able to supply her
place. Mrs. Flint took to
her bed, quite
overcome by the shock.
While my grandmother
sat alone with the dead,
the doctor came in,
leading his youngest
son, who had always
been a great pet with
aunt Nancy, and was
much attached to her.
"Martha," said he, "aunt
Nancy loved this child,
and when he comes
where you are, I hope
you will be kind to him,
for her sake." She
replied, "Your wife was
my foster-child, Dr.
Flint, the foster-sister
of my poor Nancy, and
you little know me if
you think I can feel any
thing but good will for
her children."

"I wish the past could be forgotten, and that we might never think of it," said he; "and that Linda would come to supply her aunt's place. She would be worth more to us than all the money that could be paid for her. I wish it for your sake also, Martha. Now that Nancy is taken away from you, she would be a great comfort to your old age."

He knew he was touching a tender chord. Almost choking with grief, my grandmother replied, "It was not I that drove Linda away. My grandchildren are gone; and of my nine children only one is left. God help me!"

To me, the death of this kind relative was an inexpressible sorrow. I knew that she had been slowly murdered; and I felt that my troubles had helped to finish the work. After I heard of her illness, I listened constantly to hear what news was brought from the great house; and the thought that I could not go to

her made me utterly miserable. At last, as uncle Phillip came into the house, I heard some one inquire, "How is she?" and he answered, "She is dead." My little cell seemed whirling round, and I knew nothing more till I opened my eyes and found uncle Phillip bending over me. I had no need to ask any questions. He whispered, "Linda, she died happy." I could not weep. My fixed gaze troubled him. "Don't look so," he said. "Don't add to my poor mother's trouble. Remember how much she has to bear, and that we ought to do all we can to comfort her." Ah, yes, that blessed old grandmother, who for seventy-three years had borne the pelting storms of a slave-mother's life. She did indeed need consolation!

Mrs. Flint had rendered her poor foster-sister childless, apparently without any compunction; and with cruel selfishness had ruined her health by years of incessant, unrequited toil, and broken rest. But now

she became very sentimental. I suppose she thought it would be a beautiful illustration of the attachment existing between slaveholder and slave, if the body of her old worn-out servant was buried at her feet. She sent for the clergyman and asked if he had any objection to burying aunt Nancy in the doctor's family burial-place. No colored person had ever been allowed interment in the white people's burying-ground, and the minister knew that all the deceased of our family reposed together in the old graveyard of the slaves. He therefore replied, "I have no objection to complying with your wish; but perhaps aunt Nancy's mother may have some choice as to where her remains shall be deposited."

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It had never occurred to Mrs. Flint that slaves could have any feelings. When my grandmother was consulted, she at once said she wanted Nancy to lie with all the

rest of her family, and where her own old body would be buried. Mrs. Flint graciously complied with her wish, though she said it was painful to her to have Nancy buried away from her. She might have added with touching pathos, "I was so long used to sleep with her lying near me, on the entry floor."

My uncle Philip asked permission to bury his sister at his own expense; and slaveholders are always ready to grant such favors to slaves and their relatives. The arrangements were very plain, but perfectly respectable. She was buried on the Sabbath, and Mrs. Flint's minister read the funeral service. There was a large concourse of colored people, bond and free, and a few white persons who had always been friendly to our family. Dr. Flint's carriage was in the procession; and when the body was deposited in its humble resting place, the mistress dropped a tear, and returned to her carriage, probably thinking she had

performed her duty
nobly.

It was talked of by the
slaves as a mighty
grand funeral.
Northern travellers,
passing through the
place, might have
described this tribute
of respect to the
humble dead as a
beautiful feature in the
"patriarchal
institution;" a touching
proof of the attachment
between slaveholders
and their servants; and
tender-hearted Mrs.
Flint would have
confirmed this
impression, with
handkerchief at her
eyes. We could have
told them a different
story. We could have
given them a chapter of
wrongs and sufferings,
that would have

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touched their hearts, if
they had any hearts to
feel for the colored
people. We could have
told them how the poor
old slave-mother had
toiled, year after year,
to earn eight hundred
dollars to buy her son
Phillip's right to his
own earnings; and how
that same Phillip paid

the expenses of the funeral, which they regarded as doing so much credit to the master. We could also have told them of a poor, blighted young creature, shut up in a living grave for years, to avoid the tortures that would be inflicted on her, if she ventured to come out and look on the face of her departed friend.

All this, and much more, I thought of, as I sat at my loophole, waiting for the family to return from the grave; sometimes weeping, sometimes falling asleep, dreaming strange dreams of the dead and the living.

It was sad to witness the grief of my bereaved grandmother. She had always been strong to bear, and now, as ever, religious faith supported her. But her dark life had become still darker, and age and trouble were leaving deep traces on her withered face. She had four places to knock for me to come to the trap-door, and each place had a different meaning. She now came oftener than she

had done, and talked to
me of her dead
daughter, while tears
trickled slowly down
her furrowed checks. I
said all I could to
comfort her; but it was
a sad reflection, that
instead of being able to
help her, I was a
constant source of
anxiety and trouble.
The poor old back was
fitted to its burden. It
bent under it, but did
not break.

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XXIX.
PREPARATIONS FOR
ESCAPE.

I HARDLY expect that
the reader will credit
me, when I affirm that I
lived in that little
dismal hole, almost
deprived of light and
air, and with no space
to move my limbs, for
nearly seven years. But
it is a fact; and to me a
sad one, even now; for
my body still suffers
from the effects of that
long imprisonment, to
say nothing of my soul.
Members of my family,
now living in New York
and Boston, can testify

to the truth of what I
say.

Countless were the
nights that I sat late at
the little loophole
scarcely large enough
to give me a glimpse of
one twinkling star.
There, I heard the
patrols and
slave-hunters
conferring together
about the capture of
runaways, well
knowing how rejoiced
they would be to catch
me.

Season after season,
year after year, I
peeped at my children's
faces, and heard their
sweet voices, with a
heart yearning all the
while to say, "Your
mother is here."
Sometimes it appeared
to me as if ages had
rolled away since I
entered upon that
gloomy, monotonous
existence. At times, I
was stupefied and
listless; at other times I
became very impatient
to know when these
dark years would end,
and I should again be
allowed to feel the
sunshine, and breathe
the pure air.

After Ellen left us, this
feeling increased. Mr.
Sands had agreed that

Benny might go to the
north

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whenever his uncle Phillip could go with him; and I was anxious to be there also, to watch over my children, and protect them so far as I was able. Moreover, I was likely to be drowned out of my den, if I remained much longer; for the slight roof was getting badly out of repair, and uncle Phillip was afraid to remove the shingles, lest some one should get a glimpse of me. When storms occurred in the night, they spread mats and bits of carpet, which in the morning appeared to have been laid out to dry; but to cover the roof in the daytime might have attracted attention. Consequently, my clothes and bedding were often drenched; a process by which the pains and aches in my cramped and stiffened limbs were greatly increased. I revolved various plans of escape in my mind, which I sometimes imparted to my grandmother, when she came to whisper with me at the

trap-door. The kind-hearted old woman had an intense sympathy for runaways. She had known too much of the cruelties inflicted on those who were captured. Her memory always flew back at once to the sufferings of her bright and handsome son, Benjamin, the youngest and dearest of her flock. So, whenever I alluded to the subject, she would groan out, "O, don't think of it, child. You'll break my heart." I had no good old aunt Nancy now to encourage me; but my brother William and my children were continually beckoning me to the north.

And now I must go back a few months in my story. I have stated that the first of January was the time for selling slaves, or leasing them out to new masters. If time were counted by heart-throbs, the poor slaves

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might reckon years of suffering during that festival so joyous to the free. On the New Year's

day preceding my aunt's death, one of my friends, named Fanny, was to be sold at auction, to pay her master's debts. My thoughts were with her during all the day, and at night I anxiously inquired what had been her fate. I was told that she had been sold to one master, and her four little girls to another master, far distant; that she had escaped from her purchaser, and was not to be found. Her mother was the old Aggie I have spoken of. She lived in a small tenement belonging to my grandmother, and built on the same lot with her own house. Her dwelling was searched and watched, and that brought the patrols so near me that I was obliged to keep very close in my den. The hunters were somehow eluded; and not long afterwards Benny accidentally caught sight of Fanny in her mother's hut. He told his grandmother, who charged him never to speak of it, explaining to him the frightful consequences; and he never betrayed the trust. Aggie little

dreamed that my
grandmother knew
where her daughter
was concealed, and that
the stooping form of
her old neighbor was
bending under a
similar burden of
anxiety and fear; but
these dangerous
secrets deepened the
sympathy between the
two old persecuted
mothers.

My friend Fanny and I
remained many weeks
hidden within call of
each other; but she was
unconscious of the fact.
I longed to have her
share my den, which
seemed a more secure
retreat than her own;
but I had brought so
much trouble on my
grandmother, that it
seemed wrong to ask
her to incur greater
risks. My

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restlessness increased.
I had lived too long in
bodily pain and
anguish of spirit.
Always I was in dread
that by some accident,
or some contrivance,
slavery would succeed
in snatching my
children from me. This
thought drove me
nearly frantic, and I

determined to steer for the North Star at all hazards. At this crisis, Providence opened an unexpected way for me to escape. My friend Peter came one evening, and asked to speak with me. "Your day has come, Linda," said he. "I have found a chance for you to go to the Free States. You have a fortnight to decide." The news seemed too good to be true; but Peter explained his arrangements, and told me all that was necessary was for me to say I would go. I was going to answer him with a joyful yes, when the thought of Benny came to my mind. I told him the temptation was exceedingly strong, but I was terribly afraid of Dr. Flint's alleged power over my child, and that I could not go and leave him behind. Peter remonstrated earnestly. He said such a good chance might never occur again; that Benny was free, and could be sent to me; and that for the sake of my children's welfare I ought not to hesitate a moment. I told him I would consult with uncle Phillip. My uncle

rejoiced in the plan,
and bade me go by all
means. He promised, if
his life was spared, that
he would either bring
or send my son to me
as soon as I reached a
place of safety. I
resolved to go, but
thought nothing had
better be said to my
grandmother till very
near the time of
departure. But my
uncle thought she
would feel it more
keenly if I left her so
suddenly. "I will reason
with her," said he, "and
convince her how
necessary it is, not

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only for your sake, but
for hers also. You
cannot be blind to the
fact that she is sinking
under her burdens." I
was not blind to it. I
knew that my
concealment was an
ever-present source of
anxiety, and that the
older she grew the
more nervously fearful
she was of discovery.
My uncle talked with
her, and finally
succeeded in
persuading her that it
was absolutely
necessary for me to

seize the chance so unexpectedly offered. The anticipation of being a free woman proved almost too much for my weak frame. The excitement stimulated me, and at the same time bewildered me. I made busy preparations for my journey, and for my son to follow me. I resolved to have an interview with him before I went, that I might give him cautions and advice, and tell him how anxiously I should be waiting for him at the north. Grandmother stole up to me as often as possible to whisper words of counsel. She insisted upon my writing to Dr. Flint, as soon as I arrived in the Free States, and asking him to sell me to her. She said she would sacrifice her house, and all she had in the world, for the sake of having me safe with my children in any part of the world. If she could only live to know that she could die in peace. I promised the dear old faithful friend that I would write to her as soon as I arrived, and put the letter in a safe way to reach her; but in

my own mind I
resolved that not
another cent of her
hard earnings should
be spent to pay
rapacious slaveholders
for what they called
their property. And
even if I had not been
unwilling to buy what I
had already a right to
possess, common
humanity would have
prevented me

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from accepting the
generous offer, at the
expense of turning my
aged relative out of
house and home, when
she was trembling on
the brink of the grave.
I was to escape in a
vessel; but I forbear to
mention any further
particulars. I was in
readiness, but the
vessel was
unexpectedly detained
several days. Meantime,
news came to town of a
most horrible murder
committed on a fugitive
slave, named James.
Charity, the mother of
this unfortunate young
man, had been an old
acquaintance of ours. I
have told the shocking
particulars of his death,
in my description of
some of the

neighboring
slaveholders. My
grandmother, always
nervously sensitive
about runaways, was
terribly frightened. She
felt sure that a similar
fate awaited me, if I did
not desist from my
enterprise. She sobbed,
and groaned, and
entreated me not to go.
Her excessive fear was
somewhat contagious,
and my heart was not
proof against her
extreme-agony. I was
grievously
disappointed, but I
promised to relinquish
my project.

When my friend Peter
was apprised of this, he
was both disappointed
and vexed. He said, that
judging from our past
experience, it would be
a long time before I had
such another chance to
throw away. I told him
it need not be thrown
away; that I had a
friend concealed near
by, who would be glad
enough to take the
place that had been
provided for me. I told
him about poor Fanny,
and the kind-hearted,
noble fellow, who never
turned his back upon
any body in distress,
white or black,
expressed his readiness

to help her. Aggie was much surprised when she found that we knew her secret. She was rejoiced to hear of such a chance for Fanny,

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and arrangements were made for her to go on board the vessel the next night. They both supposed that I had long been at the north, therefore my name was not mentioned in the transaction. Fanny was carried on board at the appointed time, and stowed away in a very small cabin. This accommodation had been purchased at a price that would pay for a voyage to England. But when one proposes to go to fine old England, they stop to calculate whether they can afford the cost of the pleasure; while in making a bargain to escape from slavery, the trembling victim is ready to say, "Take all I have, only don't betray me!"

The next morning I peeped through my loophole, and saw that it was dark and cloudy.

At night I received news that the wind was ahead, and the vessel had not sailed. I was exceedingly anxious about Fanny, and Peter too, who was running a tremendous risk at my instigation. Next day the wind and weather remained the same. Poor Fanny had been half dead with fright when they carried her on board, and I could readily imagine how she must be suffering now. Grandmother came often to my den, to say how thankful she was I did not go. On the third morning she rapped for me to come down to the storeroom. The poor old sufferer was breaking down under her weight of trouble. She was easily flurried now. I found her in a nervous, excited state, but I was not aware that she had forgotten to lock the door behind her, as usual. She was exceedingly worried about the detention of the vessel. She was afraid all would be discovered, and then Fanny, and Peter, and I, would all be tortured to death, and Phillip

would be utterly
ruined,

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and her house would
be torn down. Poor
Peter! If he should die
such a horrible death
as the poor slave James
had lately done, and all
for his kindness in
trying to help me, how
dreadful it would be for
us all! Alas, the thought
was familiar to me, and
had sent many a sharp
pang through my heart.
I tried to suppress my
own anxiety, and speak
soothingly to her. She
brought in some
allusion to aunt Nancy,
the dear daughter she
had recently buried,
and then she lost all
control of herself. As
she stood there,
trembling and sobbing,
a voice from the piazza
called out, "Whar is
you, aunt Marthy?"
Grandmother was
startled, and in her
agitation opened the
door, without thinking
of me. In stepped Jenny,
the mischievous
housemaid, who had
tried to enter my room,
when I was concealed
in the house of my
white benefactors. "I's
bin huntin ebery whar

for you, aunt Marthy," said she. "My missis wants you to send her some crackers." I had slunk down behind a barrel, which entirely screened me, but I imagined that Jenny was looking directly at the spot, and my heart beat violently. My grand mother immediately thought what she had done, and went out quickly with Jenny to count the crackers locking the door after her. She returned to me, in a few minutes, the perfect picture of despair. "Poor child!" she exclaimed, "my carelessness has ruined you. The boat ain't gone yet. Get ready immediately, and go with Fanny. I ain't got another word to say against it now; for there's no telling what may happen this day." Uncle Phillip was sent for, and he agreed with his mother in thinking that Jenny would inform Dr. Flint

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in less than twenty-four hours. He advised getting me on board the boat, if

possible; if not, I had better keep very still in my den, where they could not find me without tearing the house down. He said it would not do for him to move in the matter, because suspicion would be immediately excited; but he promised to communicate with Peter. I felt reluctant to apply to him again, having implicated him too much already; but there seemed to be no alternative. Vexed as Peter had been by my indecision, he was true to his generous nature, and said at once that he would do his best to help me, trusting I should show myself a stronger woman this time.

He immediately proceeded to the wharf, and found that the wind had shifted, and the vessel was slowly beating down stream. On some pretext of urgent necessity, he offered two boatmen a dollar apiece to catch up with her. He was of lighter complexion than the boatmen he hired, and when the captain saw them coming so rapidly, he thought officers

were pursuing his vessel in search of the runaway slave he had on board. They hoisted sails, but the boat gained upon them, and the indefatigable Peter sprang on board.

The captain at once recognized him. Peter asked him to go below, to speak about a bad bill he had given him. When he told his errand, the captain replied, "Why, the woman's here already; and I've put her where you or the devil would have a tough job to find her."

"But it is another woman I want to bring," said Peter. "She is in great distress, too, and you shall be paid any thing within reason, if you'll stop and take her."

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"What's her name?" inquired the captain.

"Linda," he replied.

"That's the name of the woman already here," rejoined the captain. "By George! I believe

you mean to betray
me."

"O!" exclaimed Peter,
"God knows I wouldn't
harm a hair of your
head. I am too grateful
to you. But there really
is another woman in
great danger. Do have
the humanity to stop
and take her!"

After a while they came
to an understanding.
Fanny, not dreaming I
was any where about in
that region, had
assumed my name,
though she called
herself Johnson. "Linda
is a common name,"
said Peter, "and the
woman I want to bring
is Linda Brent."

The captain agreed to
wait at a certain place
till evening, being
handsomely paid for
his detention.

Of course, the day was
an anxious one for us
all. But we concluded
that if Jenny had seen
me, she would be too
wise to let her mistress
know of it; and that she
probably would not get
a chance to see Dr.
Flint's family till
evening, for I knew
very well what were
the rules in that
household. I afterwards

believed that she did not see me; for nothing ever came of it, and she was one of those base characters that would have jumped to betray a suffering fellow being for the sake of thirty pieces of silver.

I made all my arrangements to go on board as soon as it was dusk. The intervening time I resolved to spend with my son. I had not spoken to him for seven years, though I had been under the same roof, and seen him every day, when I was well enough to sit at the loophole. I did not dare to venture beyond the

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storeroom; so they brought him there, and locked us up together, in a place concealed from the piazza door. It was an agitating interview for both of us. After we had talked and wept together for a little while, he said, "Mother, I'm glad you're going away. I wish I could go with you. I knew you was here; and I have been

so afraid they would
come and catch you!"

I was greatly surprised,
and asked him how he
had found it out.

He replied, "I was
standing under the
eaves, one day, before
Ellen went away, and I
heard somebody cough
up over the wood shed.
I don't know what
made me think it was
you, but I did think so. I
missed Ellen, the night
before she went away;
and grandmother
brought her back into
the room in-the night;
and I thought maybe
she'd been to see you,
before she went, for I
heard grandmother
whisper to her, 'Now go
to sleep; and remember
never to tell.'"

I asked him if he ever
mentioned his
suspicions to his sister.
He said he never did;
but after he heard the
cough, if he saw her
playing with other
children on that side of
the house, he always
tried to coax her round
to the other side, for
fear they would hear
me cough, too. He said
he had kept a close
lookout for Dr. Flint,
and if he saw him
speak to a constable, or

a patrol, he always told grandmother. I now recollected that I had seen him manifest uneasiness, when people were on that side of the house, and I had at the time been puzzled to conjecture a motive for his actions. Such prudence may seem extraordinary in a boy of twelve years, but slaves, being surrounded by mysteries, deceptions, and dangers, early learn to be

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suspicious and watchful, and prematurely cautious and cunning. He had never asked a question of grandmother, or uncle Phillip, and I had often heard him chime in with other children, when they spoke of my being at the north.

I told him I was now really going to the Free States, and if he was a good, honest boy, and a loving child to his dear old grandmother, the Lord would bless him, and bring him to me, and we and Ellen would live together. He began to tell me that grandmother had not

eaten any thing all day.
While he was speaking,
the door was unlocked,
and she came in with a
small bag of money,
which she wanted me
to take. I begged her to
keep a part of it, at
least, to pay for Benny's
being sent to the north;
but she insisted, while
her tears were falling
fast, that I should take
the whole. "You may be
sick among strangers,"
she said, "and they
would send you to the
poorhouse to die." Ah,
that good
grandmother!

For the last time I went
up to my nook. Its
desolate appearance no
longer chilled me, for
the light of hope had
risen in my soul. Yet,
even with the blessed
prospect of freedom
before me, I felt very
sad at leaving forever
that old homestead,
where I had been
sheltered so long by the
dear old grandmother;
where I had dreamed
my first young dream
of love; and where,
after that had faded
away, my children came
to twine themselves so
closely round my
desolate heart. As the
hour approached for
me to leave, I again

descended to the
storeroom. My
grandmother and
Benny were there. She
took me by the hand,
and said, "Linda, let us
pray." We knelt down
together, with my child

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pressed to my heart,
and my other arm
round the faithful,
loving old friend I was
about to leave forever.
On no other occasion
has it ever been my lot
to listen to so fervent a
supplication for mercy
and protection. It
thrilled through my
heart, and inspired me
with trust in God.

Peter was waiting for
me in the street. I was
soon by his side, faint
in body, but strong of
purpose. I did not look
back upon the old
place, though I felt that
I should never see it
again.

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XXX.
NORTHWARD
BOUND.

I NEVER could tell how we reached the wharf. My brain was all of a whirl, and my limbs tottered under me. At an appointed place we met my uncle Phillip, who had started before us on a different route, that he might reach the wharf first, and give us timely warning if there was any danger. A row-boat was in readiness. As I was about to step in, I felt something pull me gently, and turning round I saw Benny, looking pale and anxious. He whispered in my ear, "I've been peeping into the doctor's window, and he's at home. Good by, mother. Don't cry; I'll come." He hastened away. I clasped the hand of my good uncle, to whom I owed so much, and of Peter, the brave, generous friend who had volunteered to run such terrible risks to secure my safety. To this day I remember how his bright face beamed with joy, when he told me he had discovered a safe method for me to

escape. Yet that
intelligent,
enterprising,
noble-hearted man was
a chattel! liable, by the
laws of a country that
calls itself civilized, to
be sold with horses and
pigs! We parted in
silence. Our hearts
were all too full for
words!

Swiftly the boat glided
over the water. After a
while, one of the sailors
said, "Don't be
down-hearted, madam.
We will take you safely
to your husband, in--."
At first I could not
imagine what he
meant;

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but I had presence of
mind to think that it
probably referred to
something the captain
had told him; so I
thanked him, and said I
hoped we should have
pleasant weather.

When I entered the
vessel the captain came
forward to meet me. He
was an elderly man,
with a pleasant
countenance. He
showed me to a little
box of a cabin, where
sat my friend Fanny.
She started as if she
had seen a spectre. She
gazed on me in utter

astonishment, and exclaimed, "Linda, can this be you? or is it your ghost?" When we were locked in each other's arms, my overwrought feelings could no longer be restrained. My sobs reached the ears of the captain, who came and very kindly reminded us, that for his safety, as well as our own, it would be prudent for us not to attract any attention. He said that when there was a sail in sight he wished us to keep below; but at other times, he had no objection to our being on deck. He assured us that he would keep a good lookout, and if we acted prudently, he thought we should be in no danger. He had represented us as women going to meet our husbands in--. We thanked him, and promised to observe carefully all the directions he gave us.

Fanny and I now talked by ourselves, low and quietly, in our little cabin. She told me of the sufferings she had gone through in making her escape, and of her terrors while she was concealed in her

mother's house. Above all, she dwelt on the agony of separation from all her children on that dreadful auction day. She could scarcely credit me, when I told her of the place where I had passed nearly seven years. "We have the same sorrows," said I. "No," replied she, "you are

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going to see your children soon, and there is no hope that I shall ever even hear from mine."

The vessel was soon under way, but we made slow progress. The wind was against us. I should not have cared for this, if we had been out of sight of the town; but until there were miles of water between us and our enemies, we were filled with constant apprehensions that the constables would come on board. Neither could I feel quite at ease with the captain and his men. I was an entire stranger to that class of people, and I had heard that sailors were rough, and sometimes cruel. We were so completely

in their power, that if they were bad men, our situation would be dreadful. Now that the captain was paid for our passage, might he not be tempted to make more money by giving us up to those who claimed us as property? I was naturally of a confiding disposition, but slavery had made me suspicious of every body. Fanny did not share my distrust of the captain or his men. She said she was afraid at first, but she had been on board three days while the vessel lay in the dock, and nobody had betrayed her, or treated her otherwise than kindly.

The captain soon came to advise us to go on deck for fresh air. His friendly and respectful manner, combined with Fanny's testimony, reassured me, and we went with him. He placed us in a comfortable seat, and occasionally entered into conversation. He told us he was a Southerner by birth, and had spent the greater part of his life in the Slave States, and that he had recently

lost a brother who
traded in slaves. "But,"
said he, "it is a pitiable
and degrading
business, and I always
felt ashamed to
acknowledge my
brother in connection

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with it." As we passed
Snaky Swamp, he
pointed to it, and said,
"There is a slave
territory that defines
all the laws." I thought
of the terrible days I
had spent there, and
though it was not
called Dismal Swamp, it
made me feel very
dismal as I looked at it.
I shall never forget that
night. The balmy air of
spring was so
refreshing! And how
shall I describe my
sensations when we
were fairly sailing on
Chesapeake Bay? O, the
beautiful sunshine! the
exhilarating breeze!
and I could enjoy them
without fear or
restraint. I had never
realized what grand
things air and sunlight
are till I had been
deprived of them.

Ten days after we left
land we were
approaching

Philadelphia. The captain said we should arrive there in the night, but he thought we had better wait till morning, and go on shore in broad daylight, as the best way to avoid suspicion.

I replied, "You know best. But will you stay on board and protect us?"

He saw that I was suspicious, and he said he was sorry, now that he had brought us to the end of our voyage, to find I had so little confidence in him. Ah, if he had ever been a slave he would have known how difficult it was to trust a white man. He assured us that we might sleep through the night without fear; that he would take care we were not left unprotected. Be it said to the honor of this captain, Southerner as he was, that if Fanny and I had been white ladies, and our passage lawfully engaged, he could not have treated us more respectfully. My intelligent friend, Peter, had rightly estimated the character of the man to whose

honor he had intrusted
us.

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The next morning I was
on deck as soon as the
day dawned. I called
Fanny to see the sun
rise, for the first time in
our lives, on free soil;
for such I then believed
it to be. We watched
the reddening sky, and
saw the great orb come
up slowly out of the
water, as it seemed.
Soon the waves began
to sparkle, and every
thing caught the
beautiful glow. Before
us lay the city of
strangers. We looked at
each other, and the
eyes of both were
moistened with tears.
We had escaped from
slavery, and we
supposed ourselves to
be safe from the
hunters. But we were
alone in the world, and
we had left dear ties
behind us; ties cruelly
sundered by the demon
Slavery.

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XXXI.
INCIDENTS IN
PHILADELPHIA.

I HAD heard that the poor slave had many friends at the north. I trusted we should find some of them.

Meantime, we would take it for granted that all were friends, till they proved to the contrary. I sought out the kind captain, thanked him for his attentions, and told him I should never cease to be grateful for the service he had rendered us. I gave him a message to the friends I had left at home, and he promised to deliver it. We were placed in a row-boat, and in about fifteen minutes were landed on a wood wharf in Philadelphia. As I stood looking round, the friendly captain touched me on the shoulder, and said, "There is a respectable-looking colored man behind you. I will speak to him about the New York trains, and tell him you wish to go directly on." I thanked him, and asked him to direct me to some shops where I could buy gloves and

veils. He did so, and said he would talk with the colored man till I returned. I made what haste I could. Constant exercise on board the vessel, and frequent rubbing with salt water, had nearly restored the use of my limbs. The noise of the great city confused me, but I found the shops, and bought some double veils and gloves for Fanny and myself. The shopman told me they were so many levies. I had never heard the word before, but I did not tell him so. I thought if he knew I was a stranger he

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might ask me where I came from. I gave him a gold piece, and when he returned the change, I counted it, and found out how much a levy was. I made my way back to the wharf, where the captain introduced me to the colored man, as the Rev. Jeremiah Durham, minister of Bethel church. He took me by the hand, as if I had been an old friend. He told us we were too late for the morning cars to New York, and must wait until the

evening, or the next morning. He invited me to go home with him, assuring me that his wife would give me a cordial welcome; and for my friend he would provide a home with one of his neighbors. I thanked him for so much kindness to strangers, and told him if I must be detained, I should like to hunt up some people who formerly went from our part of the country. Mr. Durham insisted that I should dine with him, and then he would assist me in finding my friends. The sailors came to bid us good by. I shook their hardy hands, with tears in my eyes. They had all been kind to us, and they had rendered us a greater service than they could possibly conceive of.

I had never seen so large a city, or been in contact with so many people in the streets. It seemed as if those who passed looked at us with an expression of curiosity. My face was so blistered and peeled, by sitting on deck, in wind and sunshine, that I thought they could not easily decide

to what nation I
belonged.

Mrs. Durham met me
with a kindly welcome,
without asking any
questions. I was tired,
and her friendly
manner was a sweet
refreshment. God bless
her! I was sure that she
had comforted other
weary hearts, before I
received her sympathy.
She was surrounded

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by her husband and
children, in a home
made sacred by
protecting laws. I
thought of my own
children, and sighed.

After dinner Mr.
Durham went with me
in quest of the friends I
had spoken of. They
went from my native
town, and I anticipated
much pleasure in
looking on familiar
faces. They were not at
home, and we retraced
our steps through
streets delightfully
clean. On the way, Mr.
Durham observed that
I had spoken to him of
a daughter I expected
to meet; that he was
surprised, for I looked
so young he had taken
me for a single woman.

He was approaching a subject on which I was extremely sensitive. He would ask about my husband next, I thought, and if I answered him truly, what would he think of me? I told him I had two children, one in New York the other at the south. He asked some further questions, and I frankly told him some of the most important events of my life. It was painful for me to do it; but I would not deceive him. If he was desirous of being my friend, I thought he ought to know how far I was worthy of it. "Excuse me, if I have tried your feelings," said he. "I did not question you from idle curiosity. I wanted to understand your situation, in order to know whether I could be of any service to you, or your little girl. Your straight-forward answers do you credit; but don't answer every body so openly. It might give some heartless people a pretext for treating you with contempt."

That word contempt burned me like coals of fire. I replied, "God

alone knows how I
have suffered; and He,
L trust, will forgive me.
If I am permitted to

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have my children, I
intend to be a good
mother, and to live in
such a manner that
people cannot treat me
with contempt."

"I respect your
sentiments," said he.

"Place your trust in
God, and be governed
by good principles, and
you will not fail to find
friends."

When we reached
home, I went to my
room, glad to shut out
the world for a while.
The words he had
spoken made an
indelible impression
upon me. They brought
up great shadows from
the mournful past. In
the midst of my
meditations I was
startled by a knock at
the door. Mrs. Durham
entered, her face all
beaming with kindness,
to say that there was an
anti-slavery friend
down stairs, who
would like to see me. I
overcame my dread of
encountering
strangers, and went

with her. Many questions were asked concerning my experiences, and my escape from slavery; but I observed how careful they all were not to say any thing that might wound my feelings. How gratifying this was, can be fully understood only by those who have been accustomed to be treated as if they were not included within the pale of human beings. The antislavery friend had come to inquire into my plans, and to offer assistance, if needed. Fanny was comfortably established, for the present, with a friend of Mr. Durham. The Anti-Slavery Society agreed to pay her expenses to New York. The same was offered to me, but I declined to accept it; telling them that my grandmother had given me sufficient to pay my expenses to the end of my journey. We were urged to remain in Philadelphia a few days, until some suitable escort could be found for us. I gladly accepted the proposition,

for I had a dread of meeting slaveholders, and some dread also of railroads. I had never entered a railroad car in my life, and it seemed to me quite an important event.

That night I sought my pillow with feelings I had never carried to it before. I verily believed myself to be a free woman. I was wakeful for a long time, and I had no sooner fallen asleep, than I was roused by fire-bells. I jumped up, and hurried on my clothes. Where I came from, every body hastened to dress themselves on such occasions. The white people thought a great fire might be used as a good opportunity for insurrection, and that it was best to be in readiness; and the colored people were ordered out to labor in extinguishing the flames. There was but one engine in our town, and colored women and children were often required to drag it to the river's edge and fill it. Mrs. Durham's daughter slept in the same room

with me, and seeing
that she slept through
all the din, I thought it
was my duty to wake
her. "What's the
matter?" said she,
rubbing her eyes.

"They're screaming fire
in the streets, and the
bells are ringing," I
replied.

"What of that?" said
she, drowsily. "We are
used to it. We never get
up, without the fire is
very near. What good
would it do?"

I was quite surprised
that it was not
necessary for us to go
and help fill the engine.
I was an ignorant child,
just beginning to learn
how things went on in
great cities.

At daylight, I heard
women crying fresh
fish, berries, radishes,
and various other
things. All this was

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new to me. I dressed
myself at an early hour,
and sat at the window
to watch that unknown
tide of life. Philadelphia
seemed to me a
wonderfully great
place. At the breakfast

table, my idea of going out to drag the engine was laughed over, and I joined in the mirth.

I went to see Fanny, and found her so well contented among her new friends that she was in no haste to leave. I was also very happy with my kind hostess. She had had advantages for education, and was vastly my superior. Every day, almost every hour, I was adding to my little stock of knowledge. She took me out to see the city as much as she deemed prudent. One day she took me to an artist's room, and showed me the portraits of some of her children. I had never seen any paintings of colored people before, and they seemed to me beautiful.

At the end of five days, one of Mrs. Durham's friends offered to accompany us to New York the following morning. As I held the hand of my good hostess in a parting clasp, I longed to know whether her husband had repeated to her what I had told him. I supposed he had, but

she never made any
allusion to it. I presume
it was the delicate
silence of womanly
sympathy.

When Mr. Durham
handed us our tickets,
he said, "I am afraid
you will have a
disagreeable ride; but I
could not procure
tickets for the first
class cars."

Supposing I had not
given him money
enough, I offered more.
"O, no," said he, "they
could not be had for
any money. They don't
allow colored people to
go in the first-class
cars."

This was the first chill
to my enthusiasm
about the Free States.
Colored people were
allowed to ride in a

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filthy box, behind white
people, at the south,
but there they were not
required to pay for the
privilege. It made me
sad to find how the
north aped the customs
of slavery.

We were stowed away
in a large, rough car,
with windows on each
side, too high for us to

look out without standing up. It was crowded with people, apparently of all nations. There were plenty of beds and cradles, containing screaming and kicking babies. Every other man had a cigar or pipe in his mouth, and jugs of whiskey were handed round freely. The fumes of the whiskey and the dense tobacco smoke were sickening to my senses, and my mind was equally nauseated by the coarse jokes and ribald songs around me. It was a very disagreeable ride. Since that time there has been some improvement in these matters.

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**XXXII.
THE MEETING OF
MOTHER AND
DAUGHTER.**

When we arrived in New York, I was half crazed by the crowd of coachmen calling out, "Carriage, ma'am?" We bargained with one to take us to Sullivan

Street for twelve shillings. A burly Irishman stepped up and said, "I'll tak' ye for sax shillings." The reduction of half the price was an object to us, and we asked if he could take us right away. "Troth an I will, ladies," he replied. I noticed that the hackmen smiled at each other, and I inquired whether his conveyance was decent. "Yes, it's dacent it is, marm. Devil a bit would I be after takin' ladies in a cab that was not dacent." We gave him our checks. He went for the baggage, and soon reappeared, saying, "This way, if you plase, ladies." We followed, and found our trunks on a truck, and we were invited to take our seats on them. We told him that was not what we bargained for, and he must take the trunks off. He swore they should not be touched till we had paid him six shillings. In our situation it was not prudent to attract attention, and I was about to pay him what he required, when a man near by shook his head for me not to do it. After a great ado we

got rid of the Irishman,
and had our trunks
fastened on a hack. We
had been
recommended to a
boarding-house in
Sullivan Street, and
thither we drove. There
Fanny and I separated.
The Anti-Slavery
Society provided a

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home for her, and I
afterwards heard of her
in prosperous
circumstances. I sent
for an old friend from
my part of the country,
who had for some time
been doing business in
New York. He came
immediately. I told him
I wanted to go to my
daughter, and asked
him to aid me in
procuring an interview.
I cautioned him not to
let it be known to the
family that I had just
arrived from the south,
because they supposed
I had been at the north
seven years. He told me
there was a colored
woman in Brooklyn
who came from the
same town I did, and I
had better go to her
house, and have my
daughter meet me
there. I accepted the
proposition thankfully,
and he agreed to escort
me to Brooklyn. We

crossed Fulton ferry,
went up Myrtle Avenue,
and stopped at the
house he designated. I
was just about to enter,
when two girls passed.
My friend called my
attention to them. I
turned, and recognized
in the eldest, Sarah, the
daughter of a woman
who used to live with
my grandmother, but
who had left the south
years ago. Surprised
and rejoiced at this
unexpected meeting, I
threw my arms round
her, and inquired
concerning her mother.

"You take no notice of
the other girl," said my
friend. I turned, and
there stood my Ellen! I
pressed her to my
heart, then held her
away from me to take a
look at her. She had
changed a good deal in
the two years since I
parted from her. Signs
of neglect could be
discerned by eyes less
observing than a
mother's. My friend
invited us all to go into
the house; but Ellen
said she had been sent
of an errand, which she
would do as quickly as
possible, and go

home and ask Mrs. Hobbs to let her come and see me. It was agreed that I should send for her the next day. Her companion, Sarah, hastened to tell her mother of my arrival. When I entered the house, I found the mistress of it absent, and I waited for her return. Before I saw her, I heard her saying, "Where is Linda Brent? I used to know her father and mother." Soon Sarah came with her mother. So there was quite a company of us, all from my grandmother's neighborhood. These friends gathered round me and questioned me eagerly. They laughed, they cried, and they shouted. They thanked God that I had got away from my persecutors and was safe on Long Island. It was a day of great excitement. How different from the silent days I had passed in my dreary den!

The next morning was Sunday. My first waking thoughts were occupied with the note I was to send to Mrs. Hobbs, the lady with whom Ellen lived. That I had recently come

into that vicinity was evident; otherwise I should have sooner inquired for my daughter. It would not do to let them know I had just arrived from the south, for that would involve the suspicion of my having been harbored there, and might bring trouble, if not ruin, on several people.

I like a straightforward course, and am always reluctant to resort to subterfuges. So far as my ways have been crooked, I charge them all upon slavery. It was that system of violence and wrong which now left me no alternative but to enact a falsehood. I began my note by stating that I had recently arrived from Canada, and was very desirous to have my

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daughter come to see me. She came and brought a message from Mrs. Hobbs, inviting me to her house, and assuring me that I need not have any fears. The conversation I had with

my child did not leave my mind at ease. When I asked if she was well treated, she answered yes; but there was no heartiness in the tone, and it seemed to me that she said it from an unwillingness to have me troubled on her account. Before she left me, she asked very earnestly, "Mother, when will you take me to live with you?" It made me sad to think that I could not give her a home till I went to work and earned the means; and that might take me a long time. When she was placed with Mrs. Hobbs, the agreement was that she should be sent to school. She had been there two years, and was now nine years old, and she scarcely knew her letters. There was no excuse for this, for there were good public schools in Brooklyn, to which she could have been sent without expense. She staid with me till dark, and I went home with her. I was received in a friendly manner by the family, and all agreed in saying that Ellen was a useful, good girl. Mrs. Hobbs looked me coolly in the face,

and said, "I suppose you know that my cousin, Mr. Sands, has given her to my eldest daughter. She will make a nice waiting-maid for her when she grows up." I did not answer a word. How could she, who knew by experience the strength of a mother's love, and who was perfectly aware of the relation Mr. Sands bore to my children,--how could she look me in the face, while she thrust such a dagger into my heart?

I was no longer surprised that they had kept her in such a state of ignorance. Mr. Hobbs had formerly

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been wealthy, but he had failed, and afterwards obtained a subordinate situation in the Custom House. Perhaps they expected to return to the south some day; and Ellen's knowledge was quite sufficient for a slave's condition. I was impatient to go to work and earn money, that I might change the uncertain position of my children. Mr. Sands

had not kept his promise to emancipate them. I had also been deceived about Ellen. What security had I with regard to Benjamin? I felt that I had none.

I returned to my friend's house in an uneasy state of mind. In order to protect my children, it was necessary that I should own myself. I called myself free, and sometimes felt so; but I knew I was insecure. I sat down that night and wrote a civil letter to Dr. Flint, asking him to state the lowest terms on which he would sell me; and as I belonged by law to his daughter, I wrote to her also, making a similar request.

Since my arrival at the north I had not been unmindful of my dear brother William. I had made diligent inquiries for him, and having heard of him in Boston, I went thither. When I arrived there, I found he had gone to New Bedford. I wrote to that place, and was informed he had gone on a whaling voyage, and would not return for some months. I

went back to New York to get employment near Ellen. I received an answer from Dr. Flint, which gave me no encouragement. He advised me to return and submit myself to my rightful owners, and then any request I might make would be granted. I lent this letter to a friend, who lost it; otherwise I would present a copy to my readers.

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XXXIII.

A HOME FOUND.

My greatest anxiety now was to obtain employment. My health was greatly improved, though my limbs continued to trouble me with swelling whenever I walked much. The greatest difficulty in my way was, that those who employed strangers required a recommendation; and in my peculiar position, I could, of course, obtain no certificates from the families I had so faith fully served.

One day an acquaintance told me of a lady who wanted a nurse for her babe, and I immediately applied for the situation. The lady told me she preferred to have one who had been a mother, and accustomed to the care of infants. I told her I had nursed two babes of my own. She asked me many questions, but, to my great relief, did not require a recommendation from my former employers. She told me she was an English woman, and that was a pleasant circumstance to me, because I had heard they had less prejudice against color than Americans entertained. It was agreed that we should try each other for a week. The trial proved satisfactory to both parties, and I was engaged for a month.

The heavenly Father had been most merciful to me in leading me to this place. Mrs. Bruce was a kind and gentle lady, and proved a true and sympathizing friend. Before the stipulated month expired, the necessity of

passing up and down stairs frequently, caused my limbs to swell so painfully, that I became unable to perform my duties. Many ladies would have thoughtlessly discharged me; but Mrs. Bruce made arrangements to save me steps, and employed a physician to attend upon me. I had not yet told her that I was a fugitive slave. She noticed that I was often sad, and kindly inquired the cause. I spoke of being separated from my children, and from relatives who were dear to me; but I did not mention the constant feeling of insecurity which oppressed my spirits. I longed for some one to confide in; but I had been so deceived by white people, that I had lost all confidence in them. If they spoke kind words to me, I thought it was for some selfish purpose. I had entered this family with the distrustful feelings I had brought with me out of slavery; but ere six months had passed, I found that the gentle deportment of

Mrs. Bruce and the smiles of her lovely babe were thawing my chilled heart. My narrow mind also began to expand under the influences of her intelligent conversation, and the opportunities for reading, which were gladly allowed me whenever I had leisure from my duties. I gradually became more energetic and more cheerful.

The old feeling of insecurity, especially with regard to my children, often threw its dark shadow across my sunshine. Mrs. Bruce offered me a home for Ellen; but pleasant as it would have been, I did not dare to accept it, for fear of offending the Hobbs family. Their knowledge of my precarious situation placed me in their power; and I felt that it was important for me to keep on the right side of them, till, by dint of labor and economy, I could make a home for my children.

I was far from feeling satisfied with Ellen's situation. She was not well cared for. She sometimes came to New York to visit me; but she generally brought a request from Mrs. Hobbs that I would buy her a pair of shoes, or some article of clothing. This was accompanied by a promise of payment when Mr. Hobbs's salary at the Custom House became due; but some how or other the pay-day never came. Thus many dollars of my earnings were expended to keep my child comfortably clothed. That, however, was a slight trouble, compared with the fear that their pecuniary embarrassments might induce them to sell my precious young daughter. I knew they were in constant communication with Southerners, and had frequent opportunities to do it. I have stated that when Dr. Flint put Ellen in jail, at two years old, she had an inflammation of the eyes, occasioned by measles. This disease still troubled her; and kind Mrs. Bruce proposed that she

should come to New York for a while, to be under the care of Dr. Elliott, a well known oculist. It did not occur to me that there was any thing improper in a mother's making such a request; but Mrs. Hobbs was very angry, and refused to let her go. Situated as I was, it was not politic to insist upon it. I made no complaint, but I longed to be entirely free to act a mother's part towards my children. The next time I went over to Brooklyn, Mrs. Hobbs, as if to apologize for her anger, told me she had employed her own physician to attend to Ellen's eyes, and that she had refused my request because she did not consider it safe to trust her in New York. I accepted the explanation in silence; but she had told me that my child belonged to her daughter, and I suspected

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that her real motive was a fear of my conveying her property away from her. Perhaps I did her injustice; but my knowledge of

Southerners made it difficult for me to feel otherwise.

Sweet and bitter were mixed in the cup of my life, and I was thankful that it had ceased to be entirely bitter. I loved Mrs. Bruce's babe.

When it laughed and crowed in my face, and twined its little tender arms confidingly about my neck, it made me think of the time when Benny and Ellen were babies, and my wounded heart was soothed. One bright morning, as I stood at the window, tossing baby in my arms, my attention was attracted by a young man in sailor's dress, who was closely observing every house as he passed. I looked at him earnestly. Could it be my brother William? It must be he--and yet, how changed! I placed the baby safely, flew down stairs, opened the front door, beckoned to the sailor, and in less than a minute I was clasped in my brother's arms.

How much we had to tell each other! How we laughed, and how we cried, over each other's adventures! I took him to Brooklyn, and again saw him with Ellen, the

dear child whom he
had loved and tended
so carefully, while I was
shut up in my
miserable den. He staid
in New York a week.
His old feelings of
affection for me and
Ellen were as lively as
ever. There are no
bonds so strong as
those which are formed
by suffering together.

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XXXIV.
THE OLD ENEMY
AGAIN.

My young mistress,
Miss Emily Flint, did
not return any answer
to my letter requesting
her to consent to my
being sold. But after a
while, I received a
reply, which purported
to be written by her
younger brother. In
order rightly to enjoy
the contents of this
letter, the reader must
bear in mind that the
Flint family supposed I
had been at the north
many years. They had
no idea that I knew of
the doctor's three
excursions to New York
in search of me; that I
had heard his voice,

when he came to borrow five hundred dollars for that purpose; and that I had seen him pass on his way to the steamboat. Neither were they aware that all the particulars of aunt Nancy's death and burial were conveyed to me at the time they occurred. I have kept the letter, of which I herewith subjoin a copy:--

"Your letter to sister was received a few days ago. I gather from it that you are desirous of returning to your native place, among your friends and relatives. We were all gratified with the contents of your letter; and let me assure you that if any members of the family have had any feeling of resentment towards you, they feel it no longer. We all sympathize with you in your unfortunate condition, and are ready to do all in our power to make you contented and happy. It is difficult for you to return home as a free person. If

you were purchased by your grandmother, it is doubtful whether you would be permitted to remain, although it would be lawful for you to do so. If a servant should be allowed to purchase herself, after absenting herself so long from her owners, and return free, it would have an injurious effect. From your letter, I think your situation must be hard and uncomfortable. Come home. You have it in your power to be reinstated in our affections. We would receive you with open arms and tears of joy. You need not apprehend any unkind treatment, as we have not put ourselves to any trouble or expense to get you. Had we done so, perhaps we should feel otherwise. You know my sister was always attached to you, and that you were never treated as a slave. You were never put to hard work, nor exposed to field labor. On the contrary, you were taken into the house, and treated as one of us, and almost as free; and we, at least, felt that you were above disgracing

yourself by running
away. Believing you
may be induced to
come home voluntarily
has induced me to
write for my sister. The
family will be rejoiced
to see you; and your
poor old grandmother
expressed a great
desire to have you
come, when she heard
your letter read. In her
old age she needs the
consolation of having
her children round her.
Doubtless you have
heard of the death of
your aunt. She was a
faithful servant, and a
faithful member of the
Episcopal church. In
her Christian life she
taught us how to
live--and, O, too high
the price of knowledge,
she taught us how to
die! Could you have
seen us round her
death bed, with her
mother, all mingling
our tears in one
common stream, you
would have

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thought the same
heartfelt tie existed
between a master and
his servant, as between
a mother and her child.
But this subject is too
painful to dwell upon. I
must bring my letter to

a close. If you are contented to stay away from your old grandmother, your child, and the friends who love you, stay where you are. We shall never trouble ourselves to apprehend you. But should you prefer to come home, we will do all that we can to make you happy. If you do not wish to remain in the family, I know that father, by our persuasion, will be induced to let you be purchased by any person you may choose in our community. You will please answer this as soon as possible, and let us know your decision. Sister sends much love to you. In the mean time believe me your sincere friend and well wisher."

This letter was signed by Emily's brother, who was as yet a mere lad. I knew, by the style, that it was not written by a person of his age, and though the writing was disguised, I had been made too unhappy by it, in former years, not to recognize at once the hand of Dr. Flint. O, the hypocrisy of slaveholders! Did the old fox suppose I was goose enough to go into

such a trap? Verily, he relied too much on "the stupidity of the African race." I did not return the family of Flints any thanks for their cordial invitation; a remissness for which I was, no doubt, charged with base ingratitude.

Not long afterwards I received a letter from one of my friends at the south, informing me that Dr. Flint was about to visit the north. The letter had been delayed, and I supposed he might be already on the

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way. Mrs. Bruce did not know I was a fugitive. I told her that important business called me to Boston, where my brother then was, and asked permission to bring a friend to supply my place as nurse, for a fortnight. I started on my journey immediately; and as soon as I arrived, I wrote to my grandmother that if Benny came, he must be sent to Boston. I knew she was only waiting for a good chance to send him

north, and, fortunately, she had the legal power to do so, without asking leave of any body. She was a free woman; and when my children were purchased, Mr. Sands preferred to have the bill of sale drawn up in her name. It was conjectured that he advanced the money, but it was not known.

At the south, a gentleman may have a shoal of colored children without any disgrace; but if he is known to purchase them, with the view of setting them free, the example is thought to be dangerous to their "peculiar institution," and he becomes unpopular.

There was a good opportunity to send Benny in a vessel coming directly to New York. He was put on board with a letter to a friend, who was requested to see him off to Boston. Early one morning, there was a loud rap at my door, and in rushed Benjamin, all out of breath. "O mother!" he exclaimed, "here I am! I run all the way; and I

come all alone. How
d'you do?"

O reader, can you
imagine my joy? No,
you cannot, unless you
have been a slave
mother. Benjamin
rattled away as fast as
his tongue could go.
"Mother, why don't you
bring Ellen here? I
went over to Brooklyn
to see her, and she felt
very bad when I bid

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her good by. She said,
'O Ben, I wish I was
going too.' I thought
she'd know ever so
much; but she don't
know so much as I do;
for I can read, and she
can't. And, mother, I
lost all my clothes
coming. What can I do
to get some more? I
'spose free boys can get
along here at the north
as well as white boys."
I did not like to tell the
sanguine, happy little
fellow how much he
was mistaken. I took
him to a tailor, and
procured a change of
clothes. The rest of the
day was spent in
mutual asking and
answering of questions,
with the wish
constantly repeated

that the good old grandmother was with us, and frequent injunctions from Benny to write to her immediately, and be sure to tell her every thing about his voyage, and his journey to Boston.

Dr. Flint made his visit to New York, and made every exertion to call upon me, and invite me to return with him; but not being able to ascertain where I was, his hospitable intentions were frustrated, and the affectionate family, who were waiting for me with "open arms," were doomed to disappointment.

As soon as I knew he was safely at home, I placed Benjamin in the care of my brother William, and returned to Mrs. Bruce. There I remained through the winter and spring, endeavoring to perform my duties faithfully, and finding a good degree of happiness in the attractions of baby Mary, the considerate kindness of her excellent mother, and occasional interviews

with my darling
daughter.

But when summer
came, the old feeling of
insecurity haunted me.
It was necessary for me
to take little Mary out
daily, for exercise and
fresh air, and

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the city was swarming
with Southerners,
some of whom might
recognize me. Hot
weather brings out
snakes and
slaveholders, and I like
one class of the
venomous creatures as
little as I do the other.
What a comfort it is, to
be free to say so!

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**XXXV.
PREJUDICE AGAINST
COLOR.**

It was a relief to my
mind to see
preparations for
leaving the city. We
went to Albany in the
steamboat
Knickerbocker. When
the gong sounded for
tea, Mrs. Bruce said,
"Linda, it is late, and

you and baby had better come to the table with me." I replied, "I know it is time baby had her supper, but I had rather not go with you, if you please. I am afraid of being insulted." "O no, not if you are with me," she said. I saw several white nurses go with their ladies, and I ventured to do the same. We were at the extreme end of the table. I was no sooner seated, than a gruff voice said, "Get up! You know you are not allowed to sit here." I looked up, and, to my astonishment and indignation, saw that the speaker was a colored man. If his office required him to enforce the by-laws of the boat, he might, at least, have done it politely. I replied, "I shall not get up, unless the captain comes and takes me up." No cup of tea was offered me, but Mrs. Bruce handed me hers and called for another. I looked to see whether the other nurses were treated in a similar manner. They were all properly waited on.

Next morning, when we stopped at Troy for breakfast, every body was making a rush for the table. Mrs. Bruce said, "Take my arm, Linda, and we'll go in together." The landlord heard her, and said, "Madam, will you allow your nurse and baby to take

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breakfast with my family?" I knew this was to be attributed to my complexion; but he spoke courteously, and therefore I did not mind it.

At Saratoga we found the United States Hotel crowded, and Mr. Bruce took one of the cottages belonging to the hotel. I had thought, with gladness, of going to the quiet of the country, where I should meet few people, but here I found myself in the midst of a swarm of Southerners. I looked round me with fear and trembling, dreading to see some one who would recognize me. I was rejoiced to find that we were to stay but a short time.

We soon returned to New York, to make

arrangements for
spending the
remainder of the
summer at Rockaway.
While the laundress
was putting the clothes
in order, I took an
opportunity to go over
to Brooklyn to see
Ellen. I met her going
to a grocery store, and
the first words she
said, were, "O, mother,
don't go to Mrs.
Hobbs's. Her brother,
Mr. Thorne, has come
from the south, and
may be he'll tell where
you are." I accepted the
warning. I told her I
was going away with
Mrs. Bruce the next
day, and would try to
see her when I came
back.

Being in servitude to
the Anglo-Saxon race, I
was not put into a "Jim
Crow car," on our way
to Rockaway, neither
was I invited to ride
through the streets on
the top of trunks in a
truck; but every where
I found the same
manifestations of that
cruel prejudice, which
so discourages the
feelings, and represses
the energies of the
colored people. We
reached Rockaway
before dark, and put up
at the Pavilion--a large

hotel, beautifully
situated by the
sea-side--a great resort
of

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the fashionable world.
Thirty or forty nurses
were there, of a great
variety of nations.
Some of the ladies had
colored waiting-maids
and coachmen, but I
was the only nurse
tinged with the blood
of Africa. When the tea
bell rang, I took little
Mary and followed the
other nurses. Supper
was served in a long
hall. A young man, who
had the ordering of
things, took the circuit
of the table two or
three times, and finally
pointed me to a seat at
the lower end of it. As
there was but one chair,
I sat down and took the
child in my lap.
Whereupon the young
man came to me and
said, in the blandest
manner possible, "Will
you please to seat the
little girl in the chair,
and stand behind it and
feed her? After they
have done, you will be
shown to the kitchen,
where you will have a
good supper."

This was the climax! I found it hard to preserve my self-control, when I looked round, and saw women who were nurses, as I was, and only one shade lighter in complexion, eyeing me with a defiant look, as if my presence were a contamination.

However, I said nothing. I quietly took the child in my arms, went to our room, and refused to go to the table again. Mr. Bruce ordered meals to be sent to the room for little Mary and I. This answered for a few days; but the waiters of the establishment were white, and they soon began to complain, saying they were not hired to wait on negroes. The landlord requested Mr. Bruce to send me down to my meals, because his servants rebelled against bringing them up, and the colored servants of other boarders were dissatisfied because all were not treated alike.

My answer was that the colored servants ought to be

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dissatisfied with themselves, for not having too much self-respect to submit to such treatment; that there was no difference in the price of board for colored and white servants, and there was no justification for difference of treatment. I staid a month after this, and finding I was resolved to stand up for my rights, they concluded to treat me well. Let every colored man and woman do this, and eventually we shall cease to be trampled under foot by our oppressors.

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**XXXVI.
THE HAIRBREADTH
ESCAPE.**

After we returned to New York, I took the earliest opportunity to go and see Ellen. I asked to have her called down stairs; for I supposed Mrs. Hobbs's southern brother might still be there, and I was desirous to avoid

seeing him, if possible. But Mrs. Hobbs came to the kitchen, and insisted on my going up stairs. "My brother wants to see you," said she, "and he is sorry you seem to shun him. He knows you are living in New York. He told me to say to you that he owes thanks to good old aunt Martha for too many little acts of kindness for him to be base enough to betray her grandchild."

This Mr. Thorne had become poor and reckless long before he left the south, and such persons had much rather go to one of the faithful old slaves to borrow a dollar, or get a good dinner, than to go to one whom they consider an equal. It was such acts of kindness as these for which he professed to feel grateful to my grandmother. I wished he had kept at a distance, but as he was here, and knew where I was, I concluded there was nothing to be gained by trying to avoid him; on the contrary, it might be the means of exciting his ill will. I followed his sister up stairs. He

met me in a very friendly manner, congratulated me on my escape from slavery, and hoped I had a good place, where I felt happy.

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I continued to visit Ellen as often as I could. She, good thoughtful child, never forgot my hazardous situation, but always kept a vigilant lookout for my safety. She never made any complaint about her own inconveniences and troubles; but a mother's observing eye easily perceived that she was not happy. On the occasion of one of my visits I found her unusually serious. When I asked her what was the matter, she said nothing was the matter. But I insisted upon knowing what made her look so very grave. Finally, I ascertained that she felt troubled about the dissipation that was continually going on in the house. She was sent to the store very often for rum and brandy, and she felt ashamed to ask for it so often; and Mr. Hobbs and Mr. Thorne drank a great

deal, and their hands trembled so that they had to call her to pour out the liquor for them. "But for all that," said she, "Mr. Hobbs is good to me, and I can't help liking him. I feel sorry for him." I tried to comfort her, by telling her that I had laid up a hundred dollars, and that before long I hoped to be able to give her and Benjamin a home, and send them to school. She was always desirous not to add to my troubles more than she could help, and I did not discover till years afterwards that Mr. Thorne's intemperance was not the only annoyance she suffered from him. Though he professed too much gratitude to my grandmother to injure any of her descendants, he had poured vile language into the ears of her innocent great-grandchild.

I usually went to Brooklyn to spend Sunday afternoon. One Sunday, I found Ellen anxiously waiting for me near the house. "O, mother," said she, "I've

been waiting for you this long time. I'm afraid Mr. Thorne has written to tell Dr. Flint where you are. Make haste and come in. Mrs. Hobbs will tell you all about it!"

The story was soon told. While the children were playing in the grape-vine arbor, the day before, Mr. Thorne came out with a letter in his hand, which he tore up and scattered about. Ellen was sweeping the yard at the time, and having her mind full of suspicions of him, she picked up the pieces and carried them to the children, saying, "I wonder who Mr. Thorne has been writing to."

"I'm sure I don't know, and don't care," replied the oldest of the children; "and I don't see how it concerns you."

"But it does concern me," replied Ellen; "for I'm afraid he's been writing to the south about my mother."

They laughed at her,
and called her a silly
thing, but
good-naturedly put the
fragments of writing
together, in order to
read them to her. They
were no sooner
arranged, than the little
girl exclaimed, "I
declare, Ellen, I believe
you are right."

The contents of Mr.
Thorne's letter, as
nearly as I can
remember, were as
follows: "I have seen
your slave, Linda, and
conversed with her. She
can be taken very
easily, if you manage
prudently. There are
enough of us here to
swear to her identity as
your property. I am a
patriot, a lover of my
country, and I do this as
an act of justice to the
laws." He concluded by
informing the doctor of
the street and number
where I lived. The
children carried the
pieces to Mrs. Hobbs,
who immediately went
to her brother's

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room for an
explanation. He was
not to be found. The
servants said they saw

him go out with a letter in his hand, and they supposed he had gone to the post office. The natural inference was, that he had sent to Dr. Flint a copy of those fragments. When he returned, his sister accused him of it, and he did not deny the charge. He went immediately to his room, and the next morning he was missing. He had gone over to New York, before any of the family were astir.

It was evident that I had no time to lose; and I hastened back to the city with a heavy heart. Again I was to be torn from a comfortable home, and all my plans for the welfare of my children were to be frustrated by that demon Slavery! I now regretted that I never told Mrs. Bruce my story. I had not concealed it merely on account of being a fugitive; that would have made her anxious, but it would have excited sympathy in her kind heart. I valued her good opinion, and I was afraid of losing it, if I told her all the particulars of my sad story. But now I felt

that it was necessary
for her to know how I
was situated. I had
once left her abruptly,
without explaining the
reason, and it would
not be proper to do it
again. I went home
resolved to tell her in
the morning. But the
sadness of my face
attracted her attention,
and, in answer to her
kind inquiries, I poured
out my full heart to her,
before bed time. She
listened with true
womanly sympathy,
and told me she would
do all she could to
protect me. How my
heart blessed her!

Early the next morning,
Judge Vanderpool and
Lawyer Hopper were
consulted. They said I
had better leave the
city at once, as the risk
would be great

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if the case came to trial.
Mrs. Bruce took me in a
carriage to the house of
one of her friends,
where she assured me I
should be safe until my
brother could arrive,
which would be in a
few days. In the
internal my thoughts
were much occupied

with Ellen. She was mine by birth, and she was also mine by Southern law, since my grandmother held the bill of sale that made her so. I did not feel that she was safe unless I had her with me. Mrs. Hobbs, who felt badly about her brother's treachery, yielded to my entreaties, on condition that she should return in ten days. I avoided making any promise. She came to me clad in very thin garments, all outgrown, and with a school satchel on her arm, containing a few articles. It was late in October, and I knew the child must suffer; and not daring to go out in the streets to purchase any thing, I took off my own flannel skirt and converted it into one for her. Kind Mrs. Bruce came to bid me good by, and when she saw that I had taken off my clothing for my child, the tears came to her eyes. She said, "Wait for me, Linda," and went out. She soon returned with a nice warm shawl and hood for Ellen. Truly, of such souls as hers are the kingdom of heaven.

My brother reached
New York on
Wednesday. Lawyer
Hopper advised us to
go to Boston by the
Stonington route, as
there was less
Southern travel in that
direction. Mrs. Bruce
directed her servants
to tell all inquirers that
I formerly lived there,
but had gone from the
city.

We reached the
steamboat Rhode
Island in safety. That
boat employed colored
hands, but I knew that
colored passengers
were not admitted to
the cabin. I

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was very desirous for
the seclusion of the
cabin, not only on
account of exposure to
the night air, but also to
avoid observation.
Lawyer Hopper was
waiting on board for us.
He spoke to the
stewardess, and asked,
as a particular favor,
that she would treat us
well. He said to me, "Go
and speak to the
captain yourself by and
by. Take your little girl
with you, and I am sure
that he will not let her

sleep on deck." With these kind words and a shake of the hand he departed.

The boat was soon on her way, bearing me rapidly from the friendly home where I had hoped to find security and rest. My brother had left me to purchase the tickets, thinking that I might have better success than he would. When the stewardess came to me, I paid what she asked, and she gave me three tickets with clipped corners. In the most unsophisticated manner I said, "You have made a mistake; I asked you for cabin tickets. I cannot possibly consent to sleep on deck with my little daughter." She assured me there was no mistake. She said on some of the routes colored people were allowed to sleep in the cabin, but not on this route, which was much travelled by the wealthy. I asked her to show me to the captain's office, and she said she would after tea. When the time came, I took Ellen by the hand and went to the captain, politely requesting him to

change our tickets, as we should be very uncomfortable on deck. He said it was contrary to their custom, but he would see that we had berths below; he would also try to obtain comfortable seats for us in the cars; of that he was not certain, but he would speak to the conductor about it,

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when the boat arrived. I thanked him, and returned to the ladies' cabin. He came afterwards and told me that the conductor of the cars was on board, that he had spoken to him, and he had promised to take care of us. I was very much surprised at receiving so much kindness. I don't know whether the pleasing face of my little girl had won his heart, or whether the stewardess inferred from Lawyer Hopper's manner that I was a fugitive, and had pleaded with him in my behalf.

When the boat arrived at Stonington, the conductor kept his promise, and showed us to seats in the first

car, nearest the engine. He asked us to take seats next the door, but as he passed through, we ventured to move on toward the other end of the car. No incivility was offered us, and we reached Boston in safety.

The day after my arrival was one of the happiest of my life. I felt as if I was beyond the reach of the bloodhounds; and, for the first time during many years, I had both my children together with me. They greatly enjoyed their reunion, and laughed and chatted merrily. I watched them with a swelling heart. Their every motion delighted me.

I could not feel safe in New York, and I accepted the offer of a friend, that we should share expenses and keep house together. I represented to Mrs. Hobbs that Ellen must have some schooling, and must remain with me for that purpose. She felt ashamed of being unable to read or spell at her age, so instead of sending her to school with Benny, I instructed her myself

till she was fitted to enter an intermediate school. The winter passed pleasantly, while I was busy with my needle, and my children with their books.

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XXXVII.
A VISIT TO
ENGLAND.

In the spring, sad news came to me. Mrs. Bruce was dead. Never again, in this world, should I see her gentle face, or hear her sympathizing voice. I had lost an excellent friend, and little Mary had lost a tender mother. Mr. Bruce wished the child to visit some of her mother's relatives in England, and he was desirous that I should take charge of her. The little motherless one was accustomed to me, and attached to me, and I thought she would be happier in my care than in that of a stranger. I could also earn more in this way than I could by my needle. So I put Benny to a trade, and left Ellen

to remain in the house
with my friend and go
to school.

We sailed from New
York, and arrived in
Liverpool after a
pleasant voyage of
twelve days. We
proceeded directly to
London, and took
lodgings at the
Adelaide Hotel. The
supper seemed to me
less luxurious than
those I had seen in
American hotels; but
my situation was
indescribably more
pleasant. For the first
time in my life I was in
a place where I was
treated according to my
deportment, without
reference to my
complexion. I felt as if a
great millstone had
been lifted from my
breast. Ensconced in a
pleasant room, with my
dear little charge, I laid
my head on my pillow,
for the first time, with
the delightful
consciousness of pure,
unadulterated freedom.

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As I had constant care
of the child, I had little
opportunity to see the
wonders of that great
city; but I watched the
tide of life that flowed
through the streets,

and found it a strange contrast to the stagnation in our Southern towns. Mr. Bruce took his little daughter to spend some days with friends in Oxford Crescent, and of course it was necessary for me to accompany her. I had heard much of the systematic method of English education, and I was very desirous that my dear Mary should steer straight in the midst of so much propriety. I closely observed her little playmates and their nurses, being ready to take any lessons in the science of good management. The children were more rosy than American children, but I did not see that they differed materially in other respects. They were like all children--sometimes docile and sometimes wayward.

We next went to Steventon, in Berkshire. It was a small town, said to be the poorest in the county. I saw men working in the fields for six shillings, and seven shillings, a week, and women for

sixpence, and sevenpence, a day, out of which they boarded themselves. Of course they lived in the most primitive manner; it could not be otherwise, where a woman's wages for an entire day were not sufficient to buy a pound of meat. They paid very low rents, and their clothes were made of the cheapest fabrics, though much better than could have been procured in the United States for the same money. I had heard much about the oppression of the poor in Europe. The people I saw around me were, many of them, among the poorest poor. But when I visited them in their little thatched cottages, I felt that

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the condition of even the meanest and most ignorant among them was vastly superior to the condition of the most favored slaves in America. They labored hard; but they were not ordered out to toil while the stars were in the sky, and driven and slashed by an overseer,

through heat and cold,
till the stars shone out
again. Their homes
were very humble; but
they were protected by
law. No insolent patrols
could come, in the dead
of night, and flog them
at their pleasure. The
father, when he closed
his cottage door, felt
safe with his family
around him. No master
or overseer could come
and take from him his
wife, or his daughter.
They must separate to
earn their living; but
the parents knew
where their children
were going, and could
communicate with
them by letters. The
relations of husband
and wife, parent and
child, were too sacred
for the richest noble in
the land to violate with
impunity. Much was
being done to enlighten
these poor people.
Schools were
established among
them, and benevolent
societies were active in
efforts to ameliorate
their condition. There
was no law forbidding
them to learn to read
and write; and if they
helped each other in
spelling out the Bible,
they were in no danger
of thirty-nine lashes, as
was the case with

myself and poor, pious,
old uncle Fred. I repeat
that the most ignorant
and the most destitute
of these peasants was a
thousand fold better off
than the most
pampered American
slave.

I do not deny that the
poor are oppressed in
Europe. I am not
disposed to paint their
condition so
rose-colored as the
Hon. Miss Murray
paints the condition of
the slaves in the United
States. A small portion

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of my experience
would enable her to
read her own pages
with anointed eyes. If
she were to lay aside
her title, and, instead of
visiting among the
fashionable, become
domesticated, as a poor
governess, on some
plantation in Louisiana
or Alabama, she would
see and hear things
that would make her
tell quite a different
story.

My visit to England is a
memorable event in my
life, from the fact of my
having there received
strong religious
impressions. The

contemptuous manner
in which the
communion had been
administered to
colored people, in my
native place; the church
membership of Dr.
Flint, and others like
him; and the buying
and selling of slaves, by
professed ministers of
the gospel, had given
me a prejudice against
the Episcopal church.
The whole service
seemed to me a
mockery and a sham.
But my home in
Steventon was in the
family of a clergyman,
who was a true disciple
of Jesus. The beauty of
his daily life inspired
me with faith in the
genuineness of
Christian professions.
Grace entered my
heart, and I knelt at the
communion table, I
trust, in true humility
of soul.

I remained abroad ten
months, which was
much longer than I had
anticipated. During all
that time, I never saw
the slightest symptom
of prejudice against
color. Indeed, I entirely
forgot it, till the time
came for us to return to
America.

**XXXVIII.
RENEWED
INVITATIONS TO GO
SOUTH.**

We had a tedious winter passage, and from the distance spectres seemed to rise up on the shores of the United States. It is a sad feeling to be afraid of one's native country. We arrived in New York safely, and I hastened to Boston to look after my children. I found Ellen well, and improving at her school; but Benny was not there to welcome me. He had been left at a good place to learn a trade, and for several months every thing worked well. He was liked by the master, and was a favorite with his fellow-apprentices; but one day they accidentally discovered a fact they had never before suspected--that he was colored! This at once transformed him into a different being. Some of the apprentices were Americans, others

American-born Irish; and it was offensive to their dignity to have a "nigger" among them, after they had been told that he was a "nigger." They began by treating him with silent scorn, and finding that he returned the same, they resorted to insults and abuse. He was too spirited a boy to stand that, and he went off. Being desirous to do something to support himself, and having no one to advise him, he shipped for a whaling voyage. When I received these tidings I shed many tears, and bitterly reproached myself for having left him so long. But I had done it for the best, and now all I could do was to pray to the heavenly Father to guide and protect him.

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Not long after my return, I received the following letter from Miss Emily Flint, now Mrs. Dodge:--

"In this you will recognize the hand of your friend and mistress. Having heard that you had gone with a family to Europe, I have waited to hear of

your return to write to
you. I should have
answered the letter you
wrote to me long since,
but as I could not then
act independently of
my father, I knew there
could be nothing done
satisfactory to you.

There were persons
here who were willing
to buy you and run the
risk of getting you. To
this I would not
consent. I have always
been attached to you,
and would not like to
see you the slave of
another, or have unkind
treatment. I am
married now, and can
protect you. My
husband expects to
move to Virginia this
spring, where we think
of settling. I am very
anxious that you
should come and live
with me. If you are not
willing to come, you
may purchase yourself;
but I should prefer
having you live with
me. If you come, you
may, if you like, spend a
month with your
grandmother and
friends, then come to
me in Norfolk, Virginia.
Think this over, and
write as soon as
possible, and let me
know the conclusion.
Hoping that your
children are well, I

remain you friend and
mistress."

Of course I did not
write to return thanks
for this cordial
invitation. I felt
insulted to be thought
stupid enough to be
caught by such
professions.

"'Come up into my
parlor,' said the spider
to the fly;
"Tis the prettiest little
parlor that ever you did
spy."

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It was plain that Dr.
Flint's family were
apprised of my
movements, since they
knew of my voyage to
Europe. I expected to
have further trouble
from them; but having
eluded them thus far, I
hoped to be as
successful in future.
The money I had
earned, I was desirous
to devote to the
education of my
children, and to secure
a home for them. It
seemed not only hard,
but unjust, to pay for
myself. I could not
possibly regard myself
as a piece of property.
Moreover, I had worked

many years without wages, and during that time had been obliged to depend on my grandmother for many comforts in food and clothing. My children certainly belonged to me; but though Dr. Flint had incurred no expense for their support, he had received a large sum of money for them. I knew the law would decide that I was his property, and would probably still give his daughter a claim to my children; but I regarded such laws as the regulations of robbers, who had no rights that I was bound to respect.

The Fugitive Slave Law had not then passed. The judges of Massachusetts had not then stooped under chains to enter her courts of justice, so called. I knew my old master was rather skittish of Massachusetts. I relied on her love of freedom, and felt safe on her soil. I am now aware that I honored the old Commonwealth beyond her deserts.

XXXIX.**THE CONFESSION.**

For two years my daughter and I supported ourselves comfortably in Boston. At the end of that time, my brother William offered to send Ellen to a boarding school. It required a great effort for me to consent to part with her, for I had few near ties, and it was her presence that made my two little rooms seem home-like. But my judgment prevailed over my selfish feelings. I made preparations for her departure. During the two years we had lived together I had often resolved to tell her something about her father; but I had never been able to muster sufficient courage. I had a shrinking dread of diminishing my child's love. I knew she must have curiosity on the subject, but she had never asked a question. She was always very careful not to say any thing to remind me of my troubles. Now that she was going from me, I thought if I should die

before she returned,
she might hear my
story from some one
who did not
understand the
palliating
circumstances; and
that if she were entirely
ignorant on the subject,
her sensitive nature
might receive a rude
shock.

When we retired for
the night, she said,
"Mother, it is very hard
to leave you alone. I am
almost sorry I am
going, though I do want
to improve myself. But
you will write to me
often; won't you,
mother?"

I did not throw my
arms round her. I did
not answer

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her. But in a calm,
solemn way, for it cost
me great effort, I said,
"Listen to me, Ellen; I
have something to tell
you!" I recounted my
early sufferings in
slavery, and told her
how nearly they had
crushed me. I began to
tell her how they had
driven me into a great
sin, when she clasped
me in her arms, and
exclaimed, "O, don't,

mother! Please don't
tell me any more."

I said, "But, my child, I
want you to know
about your father."

"I know all about it,
mother," she replied; "I
am nothing to my
father, and he is
nothing to me. All my
love is for you. I was
with him five months in
Washington, and he
never cared for me. He
never spoke to me as
he did to his little
Fanny. I knew all the
time he was my father,
for Fanny's nurse told
me so; but she said I
must never tell any
body, and I never did. I
used to wish he would
take me in his arms and
kiss me, as he did
Fanny; or that he would
sometimes smile at me,
as he did at her. I
thought if he was my
own father, he ought to
love me. I was a little
girl then, and didn't
know any better. But
now I never think any
thing about my father.
All my love is for you."
She hugged me closer
as she spoke, and I
thanked God that the
knowledge I had so
much dreaded to
impart had not
diminished the
affection of my child. I

had not the slightest
idea she knew that
portion of my history. If
I had, I should have
spoken to her long
before; for my pent-up
feelings had often
longed to pour
themselves out to some
one I could trust. But I
loved the dear girl
better for the delicacy
she had manifested
towards her
unfortunate mother.

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The next morning, she
and her uncle started
on their journey to the
village in New York,
where she was to be
placed at school. It
seemed as if all the
sunshine had gone
away. My little room
was dreadfully lonely. I
was thankful when a
message came from a
lady, accustomed to
employ me, requesting
me to come and sew in
her family for several
weeks. On my return, I
found a letter from
brother William. He
thought of opening an
anti-slavery reading
room in Rochester, and
combining with it the
sale of some books and
stationery; and he
wanted me to unite

with him. We tried it, but it was not successful. We found warm anti-slavery friends there, but the feeling was not general enough to support such an establishment. I passed nearly a year in the family of Isaac and Amy Post, practical believers in the Christian doctrine of human brotherhood. They measured a man's worth by his character, not by his complexion. The memory of those beloved and honored friends will remain with me to my latest hour.

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XL.
THE FUGITIVE SLAVE
LAW.

My brother, being disappointed in his project, concluded to go to California; and it was agreed that Benjamin should go with him. Ellen liked her school, and was a great favorite there. They did not know her history, and she did not tell it, because she had no desire to make

capital out of their sympathy. But when it was accidentally discovered that her mother was a fugitive slave, every method was used to increase her advantages and diminish her expenses.

I was alone again. It was necessary for me to be earning money, and I preferred that it should be among those who knew me. On my return from Rochester, I called at the house of Mr. Bruce, to see Mary, the darling little babe that had thawed my heart, when it was freezing into a cheerless distrust of all my fellow-beings. She was growing a tall girl now, but I loved her always. Mr. Bruce had married again, and it was proposed that I should become nurse to a new infant. I had but one hesitation, and that was my feeling of insecurity in New York, now greatly increased by the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law. However, I resolved to try the experiment. I was again fortunate in my employer. The new Mrs. Bruce was an American, brought up under aristocratic

influences, and still living in the midst of them; but if she had any prejudice against color, I was never made aware of it;

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and as for the system of slavery, she had a most hearty dislike of it. No sophistry of Southerners could blind her to its enormity. She was a person of excellent principles and a noble heart. To me, from that hour to the present, she has been a true and sympathizing friend. Blessings be with her and hers!

About the time that I reëntered the Bruce family, an event occurred of disastrous import to the colored people. The slave Hamlin, the first fugitive that came under the new law, was given up by the bloodhounds of the north to the bloodhounds of the south. It was the beginning of a reign of terror to the colored population. The great city rushed on in its whirl of excitement, taking no note of the "short and simple annals of the poor." But

while fashionables
were listening to the
thrilling voice of Jenny
Lind in Metropolitan
Hall, the thrilling voices
of poor hunted colored
people went up, in an
agony of supplication,
to the Lord, from Zion's
church. Many families,
who had lived in the
city for twenty years,
fled from it now. Many
a poor washerwoman,
who, by hard labor, had
made herself a
comfortable home, was
obliged to sacrifice her
furniture, bid a hurried
farewell to friends, and
seek her fortune among
strangers in Canada.
Many a wife discovered
a secret she had never
known before--that her
husband was a fugitive,
and must leave her to
insure his own safety.
Worse still, many a
husband discovered
that his wife had fled
from slavery years ago,
and as "the child
follows the condition of
its mother," the
children of his love
were liable to be seized
and carried into
slavery. Every where, in
those humble homes,
there was
consternation and

anguish. But what
cared the legislators of
the "dominant race" for
the blood they were
crushing out of
trampled hearts?

When my brother
William spent his last
evening with me,
before he went to
California, we talked
nearly all the time of
the distress brought on
our oppressed people
by the passage of this
iniquitous law; and
never had I seen him
manifest such
bitterness of spirit,
such stern hostility to
our oppressors. He was
himself free from the
operation of the law;
for he did not run from
any Slave holding State,
being brought into the
Free States by his
master. But I was
subject to it; and so
were hundreds of
intelligent and
industrious people all
around us. I seldom
ventured into the
streets; and when it
was necessary to do an
errand for Mrs. Bruce,
or any of the family, I
went as much as
possible through back
streets and by-ways.
What a disgrace to a
city calling itself free,
that inhabitants,

guiltless of offence, and
seeking to perform
their duties
conscientiously, should
be condemned to live in
such incessant fear, and
have nowhere to turn
for protection! This
state of things, of
course, gave rise to
many impromptu
vigilance committees.
Every colored person,
and every friend of
their persecuted race,
kept their eyes wide
open. Every evening I
examined the
newspapers carefully,
to see what
Southerners had put up
at the hotels. I did this
for my own sake,
thinking my young
mistress and her
husband might be
among the list; I
wished also to give
information to others,
if necessary; for if
many were "running to
and fro," I resolved that
"knowledge should be
increased."

This brings up one of
my southern
reminiscences,

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which I will here briefly
relate. I was somewhat
acquainted with a slave

named Luke, who belonged to a wealthy man in our vicinity. His master died, leaving a son and daughter heirs to his large fortune. In the division of the slaves, Luke was included in the son's portion. This young man became a prey to the vices growing out of the "patriarchal institution," and when he went to the north, to complete his education, he carried his vices with him. He was brought home, deprived of the use of his limbs, by excessive dissipation. Luke was appointed to wait upon his bed-ridden master, whose despotic habits were greatly increased by exasperation at his own helplessness. He kept a cowhide beside him, and, for the most trivial occurrence, he would order his attendant to bare his back, and kneel beside the couch, while he whipped him till his strength was exhausted. Some days he was not allowed to wear anything but his shirt, in order to be in readiness to be flogged. A day seldom passed without his receiving more or less blows. If

the slightest resistance was offered, the town constable was sent for to execute the punishment, and Luke learned from experience how much more the constable's strong arm was to be dreaded than the comparatively feeble one of his master. The arm of his tyrant grew weaker, and was finally palsied; and then the constable's services were in constant requisition. The fact that he was entirely dependent on Luke's care, and was obliged to be tended like an infant, instead of inspiring any gratitude or compassion towards his poor slave, seemed only to increase his irritability and cruelty. As he lay there on his bed, a mere degraded wreck of manhood,

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he took into his head the strangest freaks of despotism; and if Luke hesitated to submit to his orders, the constable was immediately sent for. Some of these freaks were of a nature too filthy to be repeated. When I fled from the

house of bondage, I left
poor Luke still chained
to the bedside of this
cruel and disgusting
wretch.

One day, when I had
been requested to do
an errand for Mrs.
Bruce, I was hurrying
through back streets, as
usual, when I saw a
young man
approaching, whose
face was familiar to me.
As he came nearer, I
recognized Luke. I
always rejoiced to see
or hear of any one who
had escaped from the
black pit; but,
remembering this poor
fellow's extreme
hardships, I was
peculiarly glad to see
him on Northern soil,
though I no longer
called it free soil. I well
remembered what a
desolate feeling it was
to be alone among
strangers, and I went
up to him and greeted
him cordially. At first,
he did not know me;
but when I mentioned
my name, he
remembered all about
me. I told him of the
Fugitive Slave Law, and
asked him if he did not
know that New York
was a city of
kidnappers.

He replied, "De risk ain't so bad for me, as 'tis fur you. 'Cause I runned away from de speculator, and you runned away from de massa. Dem speculators vont spen dar money to come here fur a runaway, if dey ain't sartin sure to put dar hans right on him. An I tell you I's tuk good car 'bout dat. I had too hard times down dar, to let'em ketch dis nigger."

He then told me of the advice he had received, and the plans he had laid. I asked if he had money enough to take him to Canada. "'Pend upon it, I

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hab," he replied. "I tuk car fur dat. I'd bin workin all my days fur dem cussed whites, an got no pay but kicks and cuffs. So I tought dis nigger had a right to money nuff to bring him to de Free States. Massa Henry he lib till ebery body vish him dead; an ven he did die, I knowed de debbil would hab him, an wouldn't vant him to bring his money 'long

too. So I tuk some of his bills, and put 'em in de pocket of his ole trousers. An ven he was buried, dis nigger ask fur dem ole trousers, an dey gub 'em to me." With a low, chuckling laugh, he added, "You see I didn't steal it; dey gub it to me. I tell you, I had mighty hard time to keep de speculator from findin it; but he didn't git it."

This is a fair specimen of how the moral sense is educated by slavery. When a man has his wages stolen from him, year after year, and the laws sanction and enforce the theft, how can he be expected to have more regard to honesty than has the man who robs him? I have become somewhat enlightened, but I confess that I agree with poor, ignorant, much-abused Luke, in thinking he had a right to that money, as a portion of his unpaid wages. He went to Canada forth-with, and I have not since heard from him.

All that winter I lived in a state of anxiety. When I took the children out to breathe the air, I

closely observed the countenances of all I met. I dreaded the approach of summer, when snakes and slaveholders make their appearance. I was, in fact, a slave in New York, as subject to slave laws as I had been in a Slave State. Strange incongruity in a State called free!

Spring returned, and I received warning from the

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south that Dr. Flint knew of my return to my old place, and was making preparations to have me caught. I learned afterwards that my dress, and that of Mrs. Bruce's children, had been described to him by some of the Northern tools, which slaveholders employ for their base purposes, and then indulge in sneers at their cupidity and mean servility.

I immediately informed Mrs. Bruce of my danger, and she took prompt measures for my safety. My place as nurse could not be supplied immediately, and this generous,

sympathizing lady
proposed that I should
carry her baby away. It
was a comfort to me to
have the child with me;
for the heart is
reluctant to be torn
away from every object
it loves. But how few
mothers would have
consented to have one
of their own babes
become a fugitive, for
the sake of a poor,
hunted nurse, on whom
the legislators of the
country had let loose
the bloodhounds!
When I spoke of the
sacrifice she was
making, in depriving
herself of her dear
baby, she replied, "It is
better for you to have
baby with you, Linda;
for if they get on you
track, they will be
obliged to bring the
child to me; and then, if
there is a possibility of
saving you, you shall be
saved."

This lady had a very
wealthy relative, a
benevolent gentleman
in many respects, but
aristocratic and
proslavery. He
remonstrated with her
for harboring a fugitive
slave; told her she was
violating the laws of
her country; and asked
her if she was aware of

the penalty. She
replied, "I am very well
aware of it. It is
imprisonment and one
thousand dollars fine.
Shame on my country
that it is so! I am ready
to

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incur the penalty. I will
go to the state's prison,
rather than have any
poor victim torn from
my house, to be carried
back to slavery."

The noble heart! The
brave heart! The tears
are in my eyes while I
write of her. May the
God of the helpless
reward her for her
sympathy with my
persecuted people!

I was sent into New
England, where I was
sheltered by the wife of
a senator, whom I shall
always hold in grateful
remembrance. This
honorable gentleman
would not have voted
for the Fugitive Slave
Law, as did the senator
in "Uncle Tom's Cabin;"
on the contrary, he was
strongly opposed to it;
but he was enough
under its influence to
be afraid of having me
remain in his house
many hours. So I was

sent into the country,
where I remained a
month with the baby.
When it was supposed
that Dr. Flint's
emissaries had lost
track of me, and given
up the pursuit for the
present, I returned to
New York.

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XLI.

FREE AT LAST.

Mrs. Bruce , and every
member of her family,
were exceedingly kind
to me. I was thankful
for the blessings of my
lot, yet I could not
always wear a cheerful
countenance. I was
doing harm to no one;
on the contrary, I was
doing all the good I
could in my small way;
yet I could never go out
to breathe God's free
air without trepidation
at my heart. This
seemed hard; and I
could not think it was a
right state of things in
any civilized country.

From time to time I
received news from my
good old grandmother.
She could not write;
but she employed

others to write for her.
The following is an
extract from one of her
last letters:--

"Dear Daughter: I
cannot hope to see you
again on earth; but I
pray to God to unite us
above, where pain will
no more rack this
feeble body of mine;
where sorrow and
parting from my
children will be no
more. God has
promised these things
if we are faithful unto
the end. My age and
feeble health deprive
me of going to church
now; but God is with
me here at home.
Thank your brother for
his kindness. Give
much love to him, and
tell him to remember
the Creator in the days
of his youth, and strive
to meet me in the
Father's kingdom. Love
to Ellen and Benjamin.
Don't neglect him. Tell
him for me, to be a
good boy. Strive, my
child; to train them for
God's

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children. May he
protect and provide for
you, is the prayer of
your loving old
mother."

These letters both
cheered and saddened
me. I was always glad
to have tidings from the
kind, faithful old friend
of my unhappy youth;
but her messages of
love made my heart
yearn to see her before
she died, and I
mourned over the fact
that it was impossible.
Some months after I
returned from my flight
to New England, I
received a letter from
her, in which she wrote,
"Dr. Flint is dead. He
has left a distressed
family. Poor old man! I
hope he made his
peace with God."

I remembered how he
had defrauded my
grandmother of the
hard earnings she had
loaned; how he had
tried to cheat her out of
the freedom her
mistress had promised
her, and now he had
persecuted her
children; and I thought
to myself that she was a
better Christian than I
was, if she could
entirely forgive him. I
cannot say, with truth,
that the news of my old
master's death
softened my feelings
towards him. There are
wrongs which even the
grave does not bury.

The man was odious to me while he lived, and his memory is odious now.

His departure from this world did not diminish my danger. He had threatened my grandmother that his heirs should hold me in slavery after he was gone; that I never should be free so long as a child of his survived. As for Mrs. Flint, I had seen her in deeper afflictions than I supposed the loss of her husband would be, for she had buried several children; yet I never saw any signs of softening in her heart. The doctor had died in embarrassed circumstances, and had

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little to will to his heirs, except such property as he was unable to grasp. I was well aware what I had to expect from the family of Flints; and my fears were confirmed by a letter from the south, warning me to be on my guard, because Mrs. Flint openly declared that her daughter could not afford to lose so

valuable a slave as I was.

I kept close watch of the newspapers for arrivals; but one Saturday night, being much occupied, I forgot to examine the Evening Express as usual. I went down into the parlor for it, early in the morning, and found the boy about to kindle a fire with it. I took it from him and examined the list of arrivals. Reader, if you have never been a slave, you cannot imagine the acute sensation of suffering at my heart, when I read the names of Mr. and Mrs. Dodge, at a hotel in Courtland Street. It was a third-rate hotel, and that circumstance convinced me of the truth of what I had heard, that they were short of funds and had need of my value, as they valued me; and that was by dollars and cents. I hastened with the paper to Mrs. Bruce. Her heart and hand were always open to every one in distress, and she always warmly sympathized with mine. It was impossible to tell how near the enemy was. He might

have passed and
repassed the house
while we were
sleeping. He might at
that moment be
waiting to pounce upon
me if I ventured out of
doors. I had never seen
the husband of my
young mistress, and
therefore I could not
distinguish him from
any other stranger. A
carriage was hastily
ordered; and, closely
veiled, I followed Mrs.
Bruce, taking the baby
again with me into
exile. After various
turnings and crossings,

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and returnings, the
carriage stopped at the
house of one of Mrs.
Bruce's friends, where I
was kindly received.
Mrs. Bruce returned
immediately, to instruct
the domestics what to
say if any one came to
inquire for me.

It was lucky for me that
the evening paper was
not burned up before I
had a chance to
examine the list of
arrivals. It was not long
after Mrs. Bruce's
return to her house,
before several people
came to inquire for me.
One inquired for me,

another asked for my daughter Ellen, and another said he had a letter from my grandmother, which he was requested to deliver in person.

They were told, "She has lived here, but she has left."

"How long ago?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Do you know where she went?"

"I do not, sir." And the door was closed.

This Mr. Dodge, who claimed me as his property, was originally a Yankee pedler in the south; then he became a merchant, and finally a slaveholder. He managed to get introduced into what was called the first society, and married Miss Emily Flint. A quarrel arose between him and her brother, and the brother cowhided him. This led to a family feud, and he proposed to remove to Virginia. Dr. Flint left him no property, and his own means had become circumscribed, while a wife and children depended upon him for support.

Under these
circumstances, it was
very natural that he
should make an effort
to put me into his
pocket.

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I had a colored friend, a
man from my native
place, in whom I had
the most implicit
confidence. I sent for
him, and told him that
Mr. and Mrs. Dodge had
arrived in New York. I
proposed that he
should call upon them
to make inquiries about
his friends at the south,
with whom Dr. Flint's
family were well
acquainted. He thought
there was no
impropriety in his
doing so, and he
consented. He went to
the hotel, and knocked
at the door of Mr.
Dodge's room, which
was opened by the
gentleman himself,
who gruffly inquired,
"What brought you
here? How came you to
know I was in the city?"

"Your arrival was
published in the
evening papers, sir;
and I called to ask Mrs.
Dodge about my
friends at home. I

didn't suppose it would
give any offence."

"Where's that negro
girl, that belongs to my
wife?"

"What girl, sir?"

"You know well
enough. I mean Linda,
that ran away from Dr.
Flint's plantation, some
years ago. I dare say
you've seen her, and
know where she is."

"Yes, sir, I've seen her,
and know where she is.
She is out of your
reach, sir."

"Tell me where she is,
or bring her to me, and
I will give her a chance
to buy her freedom."

"I don't think it would
be of any use, sir. I have
heard her say she
would go to the ends of
the earth, rather than
pay any man or woman
for her freedom,
because she thinks she
has a right to it.
Besides, she couldn't
do it, if she would, for
she has spent her
earnings to educate her
children."

This made Mr. Dodge
very angry, and some
high words passed

between them. My
friend was afraid to

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come where I was; but
in the course of the day
I received a note from
him. I supposed they
had not come from the
south, in the winter, for
a pleasure excursion;
and now the nature of
their business was very
plain.

Mrs. Bruce came to me
and entreated me to
leave the city the next
morning. She said her
house was watched,
and it was possible that
some clew to me might
be obtained. I refused
to take her advice. She
pleaded with an
earnest tenderness,
that ought to have
moved me; but I was in
a bitter, disheartened
mood. I was weary of
flying from pillar to
post. I had been chased
during half my life, and
it seemed as if the
chase was never to end.
There I sat, in that
great city, guiltless of
crime, yet not daring to
worship God in any of
the churches. I heard
the bells ringing for
afternoon service, and,
with contemptuous
sarcasm, I said, "Will

the preachers take for
their text, 'Proclaim
liberty to the captive,
and the opening of
prison doors to them
that are bound'? or will
they preach from the
text, 'Do unto others as
ye would they should
do unto you'?"

Oppressed Poles and
Hungarians could find
a safe refuge in that
city; John Mitchell was
free to proclaim in the
City Hall his desire for
"a plantation well
stocked with slaves;"
but there I sat, an
oppressed American,
not daring to show my
face. God forgive the
black and bitter
thoughts I indulged on
that Sabbath day! The
Scripture says,
"Oppression makes
even a wise man mad;"
and I was not wise.

I had been told that Mr.
Dodge said his wife had
never signed away her
right to my children,
and if he could not get
me, he would take
them. This it was, more

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than any thing else,
that roused such a
tempest in my soul.
Benjamin was with his

uncle William in
California, but my
innocent young
daughter had come to
spend a vacation with
me. I thought of what I
had suffered in slavery
at her age, and my
heart was like a tiger's
when a hunter tries to
seize her young.

Dear Mrs. Bruce! I
seem to see the
expression of her face,
as she turned away
discouraged by my
obstinate mood.
Finding her
expostulations
unavailing, she sent
Ellen to entreat me.
When ten o'clock in the
evening arrived and
Ellen had not returned,
this waterful and
unwearied friend
became anxious. She
came to us in a
carriage, bringing a
well-filled trunk for my
journey--trusting that
by this time I would
listen to reason. I
yielded to her, as I
ought to have done
before.

The next day, baby and
I set out in a heavy
snow storm, bound for
New England again. I
received letters from
the City of Iniquity,
addressed to me under
an assumed name. In a

few days one came from Mrs. Bruce, informing me that my new master was still searching for me, and that she intended to put an end to this persecution by buying my freedom. I felt grateful for the kindness that prompted this offer, but the idea was not so pleasant to me as might have been expected. The more my mind had become enlightened, the more difficult it was for me to consider myself an article of property; and to pay money to those who had so grievously oppressed me seemed like taking from my sufferings the glory of triumph. I wrote to Mrs. Bruce, thanking her, but saying that being sold from one owner to another seemed too much like

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slavery; that such a great obligation could not be easily cancelled; and that I preferred to go to my brother in California.

Without my knowledge, Mrs. Bruce employed a gentleman

in New York to enter into negotiations with Mr. Dodge. He proposed to pay three hundred dollars down, if Mr. Dodge would sell me, and enter into obligations to relinquish all claim to me or my children forever after. He who called himself my master said he scorned so small an offer for such a valuable servant. The gentleman replied, "You can do as you choose, sir. If you reject this offer you will never get any thing; for the woman has friends who will convey her and her children out of the country."

Mr. Dodge concluded that "half a loaf was better than no bread," and he agreed to the proffered terms. By the next mail I received this brief letter from Mrs. Bruce: "I am rejoiced to tell you that the money for your freedom has been paid to Mr. Dodge. Come home to-morrow. I long to see you and my sweet babe."

My brain reeled as I read these lines. A gentleman near me said, "It's true; I have seen the bill of sale."

"The bill of sale!" Those words struck me like a blow. So I was sold at last! A human being sold in the free city of New York! The bill of sale is on record, and future generations will learn from it that women were articles of traffic in New York, late in the nineteenth century of the Christian religion. It may hereafter prove a useful document to antiquaries, who are seeking to measure the progress of civilization in the United States. I well know the value of that bit

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of paper; but much as I love freedom, I do not like to look upon it. I am deeply grateful to the generous friend who procured it, but I despise the miscreant who demanded payment for what never rightfully belonged to him or his. I had objected to having my freedom bought, yet I must confess that when it was done I felt as if a heavy load had been lifted from my weary shoulders. When I rode

home in the cars I was
no longer afraid to
unveil my face and look
at people as they
passed. I should have
been glad to have met
Daniel Dodge himself;
to have had him seen
me and known me, that
he might have mourned
over the untoward
circumstances which
compelled him to sell
me for three hundred
dollars.

When I reached home,
the arms of my
benefactress were
thrown round me, and
our tears mingled. As
soon as she could
speak, she said, "O
Linda, I'm so glad it's
all over! You wrote to
me as if you thought
you were going to be
transferred from one
owner to another. But I
did not buy you for
your services. I should
have done just the
same, if you had been
going to said for
California to-morrow. I
should, at least, have
the satisfaction of
knowing that you left
me a free woman."

My heart was
exceedingly full. I
remembered how my
poor father had tried to
buy me, when I was a
small child, and how he

had been disappointed.
I hoped his spirit was
rejoicing over me now.
I remembered how my
good old grandmother
had laid up her
earnings to purchase
me in later years, and
how often her plans
had been frustrated.
How that faithful,
loving old heart would
leap for joy, if she could
look on me and

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my children now that
we were free! My
relatives had been
foiled in all their
efforts, but God had
raised me up a friend
among strangers, who
had bestowed on me
the precious,
long-desired boon.
Friend! It is a common
word, often lightly
used. Like other good
and beautiful things, it
may be tarnished by
careless handling; but
when I speak of Mrs.
Bruce as my friend, the
word is sacred.
My grandmother lived
to rejoice in my
freedom; but not long
after, a letter came with
a black seal. She had
gone "where the
wicked cease from

troubling, and the weary are at rest."

Time passed on, and a paper came to me from the south, containing an obituary notice of my uncle Phillip. It was the only case I ever knew of such an honor conferred upon a colored person. It was written by one of his friends, and contained these words: "Now that death has laid him low, they call him a good man and a useful citizen; but what are eulogies to the black man, when the world has faded from his vision? It does not require man's praise to obtain rest in God's kingdom." So they called a colored man a citizen ! Strange words to be uttered in that region!

Reader, my story ends with freedom; not in the usual way, with marriage. I and my children are now free! We are as free from the power of slaveholders as are the white people of the north; and though that, according to my ideas, is not saying a great deal, it is a vast improvement in my condition. The dream of my life is not

yet realized. I do not sit
with my children in a
home of my own. I still
long for a hearthstone
of my own, however
humble. I wish it for my

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children's sake far
more than for my own.
But God so orders
circumstances as to
keep me with my friend
Mrs. Bruce. Love, duty,
gratitude, also bind me
to her side. It is a
privilege to serve her
who pities my
oppressed people, and
who has bestowed the
inestimable boon of
freedom on me and my
children.

It has been painful to
me, in many ways, to
recall the dreary years I
passed in bondage. I
would gladly forget
them if I could. Yet the
retrospection is not
altogether without
solace; for with those
gloomy recollections
come tender memories
of my good old
grandmother, like light,
fleecy clouds floating
over a dark and
troubled sea.

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APPENDIX .

The following statement is from Amy Post, a member of the Society of Friends in the State of New York, well known and highly respected by friends of the poor and the oppressed. As has been already stated, in the preceding pages, the author of this volume spent some time under her hospitable roof. L. M. C.

"The author of this book is my highly-esteemed friend. If its readers knew her as I know her, they could not fail to be deeply interested in her story. She was a beloved inmate of our family nearly the whole of the year 1849. She was introduced to us by her affectionate and conscientious brother, who had previously related to us some of the almost incredible events in his sister's life. I immediately became much interested in Linda; for her appearance was prepossessing, and her deportment indicated remarkable delicacy of feeling and purity of thought.

"As we became acquainted, she related to me, from time to time some of the incidents in her bitter experiences as a slave-woman. Though impelled by a natural craving for human sympathy, she passed through a baptism of suffering, even in recounting her trials to me, in private confidential conversations. The burden of these memories lay heavily upon her spirit--naturally virtuous and refined. I repeatedly urged her to consent to the publication of her narrative; for I felt that it would arouse people to a more earnest work for the disinthralment of millions still remaining in that soul-crushing condition, which was so unendurable to her. But her sensitive spirit shrank from publicity. She said, 'You

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know a woman can whisper her cruel wrongs in the ear of a dear friend much easier than she can record them for the world to read.' Even in talking with me, she wept so much, and seemed to suffer such mental agony, that I felt her story was too sacred to be drawn from her by inquisitive questions, and I left her free to tell as much, or as little, as she chose. Still, I urged upon her the duty of publishing her experience, for the sake of the good it might do; and, at last, she undertook the task.

"Having been a slave so large a portion of her life, she is unlearned; she is obliged to earn her living by her own labor, and she has worked untiringly to procure education for her children; several times she has been obliged to leave her employments, in order to fly from the man-hunters and woman-hunters of our land; but she pressed through all these obstacles and overcame them. After the labors of the day were over, she traced secretly and wearily, by the midnight lamp, a truthful record of her eventful life.

"This Empire State is a shabby place of refuge for the oppressed; but here, through anxiety, turmoil, and despair, the freedom of Linda and her children was finally secured, by the exertions of a generous friend. She was grateful for the boon; but the idea of having been bought was always galling to a spirit that could never acknowledge itself to be a chattel. She wrote to us thus, soon after the event: 'I thank you for your kind expressions in regard to my freedom; but the freedom I had before the money was paid was dearer to me. God gave me that freedom; but man put God's image in the scales with the paltry sum of three

hundred dollars. I served for my liberty as faithfully as Jacob served for Rachel. At the end, he had large possessions; but I was robbed of my victory; I was obliged to resign my crown, to rid myself of a tyrant.'

"Her story, as written by herself, cannot fail to interest the reader. It is a sad illustration of the condition of this country, which boasts of its civilization, while it sanctions laws and customs which make the experiences of the present more strange than any fictions of the past. Amy Post.

"Rochester, N. Y., Oct. 30th, 1859."

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The following testimonial is from a man who is now a highly respectable colored citizen of Boston. L. M. C.

"This narrative contains some incidents so extraordinary, that, doubtless, many persons, under whose eyes it may chance to fall, will be ready to believe that it is colored highly, to serve a special purpose. But, however it may be regarded by the incredulous, I know that it is full of living truths. I have been well acquainted with the author from my boyhood. The circumstances recounted in her history are perfectly familiar to me. I knew of her treatment from her master; of the imprisonment of her children; of their sale and redemption; of her seven years' concealment; and of her subsequent escape to the North. I am now a resident of Boston, and am a living witness to the truth of this interesting narrative. George W. Lowther."